

Commentary

Volume Seventy-seven, Number Five, May 1984

The Lesson of Lebanon

Michael Ledeen

Best-Case Thinking

Owen Harries

Cravat Jews and Caftan Jews

Theodore S. Hamerow

Homage to Raymond Aron

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Politicizing Science

Jeffrey Marsh

Bartók at the Piano

Samuel Lipman

BOOKS IN REVIEW

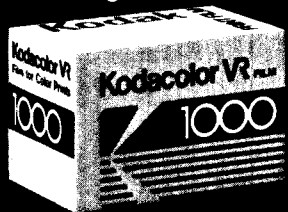
Norman Podhoretz on Mayor Koch

Chester E. Flinn, Jr. / David Vital / John C. Chalberg / Mary Tedeschi



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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

Arms & Anxiety

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It was interesting to read "Why an American Arms Build-up Is Morally Necessary" by Patrick Glynn [February] the same week that the article entitled "Danger in Moscow" by Seweryn Bialer appeared in the *New York Review of Books*. . . . Mr. Glynn and many others have made a good case for the necessity of maintaining sufficient arms to match the Soviets for both moral and strategic reasons. Why, then, in the face of cogent reasoning, is the opposition so strident and narrow-minded, and why does it seem to command such a great degree of popular support?

Bialer paints a picture of the mood of the leadership in Moscow as he experienced it. Describing the anger, the sense of injury, and the determination not to be deprived by the United States of superpower status, and how these have been stimulated by the American arms build-up as well as by the rhetoric of the Reagan administration, he points out . . . that perhaps we are not dealing with cool, calculating rational men seeking advantage in the ancient tradition of power politics, but with irrational men who live with major distortions of understanding about the outside world and about their Western opponents. Rather than (or, possibly, as well as) cynically pressing for military and political advantage, they fear losing respect. Rather than pushing us around, they fear being pushed around by us.

The Glynn article focuses primarily and dispassionately on strategic necessities, and on moral and political culture. The Bialer article is laced with anxiety. In his analysis of the opposition to the administration's arms policy, I believe Mr. Glynn has paid insufficient attention to the role of anxiety and the ways in which people often handle it.

In the first place, nobody can deny that the notion of nuclear war is frightening to any rational person. What makes it even more frightening are the imponderables involved. For example, what are the real intentions of the Soviet leadership? Were the feelings expressed to Bialer heartfelt, or were they just another blow in the propa-

ganda war? If Soviet leaders are truly paranoid, perhaps we should take care not to provoke them. If, on the other hand, the Soviet leaders are not paranoid, but simply playing power politics (and want us to think they are paranoid as part of their power-politics game), then we should be confrontationist in order to set adequate limits to their behavior. The truth, I think, is that nobody on this side of the Soviet shroud of secrecy really knows what the leadership thinks. . . .

In understanding much of the intellectual rigidity and the stridency of the opposition to our efforts to counter the Soviet threat, it is, I think, important to appreciate how anxiety can lead to certain distortions of thinking. For example, if the Soviet leadership is shrouded in secrecy and inaccessible to the influence of public opinion, and if the Soviet Union might, in fact, constitute a threat to our liberties, then anxiety can be reduced if the reality of the Soviet threat can be denied. . . . As an example of this denial, I have heard mental-health professionals with little first-hand knowledge confidently assure their audiences that any notion that Soviet leaders might have thought processes different from ours and might actually constitute a threat to our freedoms is just a "paranoid projection" by our own leadership.

In addition to denying the reality of something which we cannot control (the Soviet threat), another way to reduce anxiety is to fix the source of the anxiety in something we can have some hope of affecting. Thus, blaming our government, our military, and our policy-makers at least offers some hope of change through the democratic process. After all, we can do little about the Soviet government, but we can influence our own.

We should understand that recognizing the Soviet threat as a real threat increases anxiety by forcing the observer to experience both a threat to our civilization (nuclear war) and a threat to our freedoms (the Soviet Union). It is not hard to see how ignoring the Soviet reality removes at least one source of this anxiety.

As a clinical psychiatrist, I know that the first task that needs to be done with someone who is experiencing great anxiety and who, be-

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cause of this, is locked into rigid and concrete ways of thinking, is to acknowledge the legitimacy of the anxiety and to seek realistic ways of lowering it. Perhaps the current debate about the defense of freedom in the West as well as the avoidance of World War III would become more amenable to resolution if there were more acknowledgment of the underlying anxieties experienced by both sides.

RONALD ABRAMSON
Tufts University School of Medicine
Medford, Massachusetts

PATRICK GLYNN writes:

Ronald Abramson is no doubt right to point out that the debate over nuclear arms is attended by a good deal of anxiety, and it is also clear that many people have a distorted, or at least mistaken, view of the pattern of U.S.-Soviet relations. Whether the mechanism of distortion or denial operates precisely as Mr. Abramson suggests, I am not certain. In any case, it is worth remembering that the "anxiety" in question is always connected with a particular vision of politics, a set of assumptions about how the world works. I am skeptical about how much is to be gained from "acknowledging" the legitimacy of anxieties: politics, after all, is not therapy. Visions of politics, however, can be argued with effectively and occasionally even refuted on the basis of reasoning and fact. Mr. Abramson makes a worthwhile effort to analyze the thinking—and feelings—of the opposition in the nuclear debate. I have less faith, nonetheless, in his ability to "cure" such people (especially since they're busy trying to work a "cure" of their own). Better in the end, I think, to set psychologistic explanations aside and argue the case for or against U.S. strength and firmness on the basis of its merits.

The Book of Job

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The book of Job, which Carlyle without hyperbole described as "the grandest book ever written with pen," will never cease to disclose new insights to sensitive and sympathetic readers. With the literary sensibility we have come to expect from him, Robert Alter ["The Voice from the Whirlwind," January] has noted cadences and resonances in the book of Job for which readers will be grateful.

Particularly valuable is his dis-

covery of the relationship and contrast in mood and substance between Job's lament (Chapter 3) and the opening speech of the "Lord Out of the Whirlwind" (Chapter 38).

It should be added that the points of contact between the opening and the close of Job he has noted, support, though obviously they cannot demonstrate, the unity of authorship of the entire book. This view I have presented and defended on many other grounds in my two books, *The Book of God and Man* (University of Chicago Press, 1968) and *The Book of Job, Commentary, New Translation, and Special Studies* (Jewish Theological Seminary, 1970). I find completely untenable the atomistic approach maintained by some scholars who prefer to regard the book of Job as a collection of *disiecta membra* thrown together until somehow a masterpiece emerged.

While Mr. Alter seems to exude a faint air of disdain for critical scholarship, there is far more than pedantry involved in determining the architectonic unity of the book—it is crucial for understanding its fundamental theme. The purely literary analysis, of which Mr. Alter is a distinguished practitioner, cannot of itself suffice, any more than technical scholarship alone, burrowing among minutiae, can reveal the full meaning of a biblical writer. Both approaches are required.

Two important instances may be advanced. In one of the most significant passages in his essay, Mr. Alter writes: "There is often narrative progression from the first half of the line to the second; still more commonly, one encounters an intensification or focusing of assertion between the parallel members, images, acts, and ideas. . . . These two patterns of semantic movement within the line are very often projected forward through a sequence of lines, and so become structuring principles in the poem."

However, the progression of ideas and the intensification of assertion go far beyond individual or succeeding lines of the poem—the matter is not merely literary, but substantive. Thus, I have called attention to a highly significant fact in the three rounds of Job's debate with his friends (Chapters 4-31). As he challenges the justice and truth of their simple-minded and hard-hearted theology, Job himself is moving toward a deeper faith. Three stages may be discerned in the growth of Job's awareness of a

mysterious God Who, in ways beyond our comprehension, represents the principle of justice in the universe; he is expressed in three passages: 9:33, 16:19, and 19:25-26.

In the first, Job pleads for an arbiter (*mokhiah*) to judge fairly between him and the God of violence at whose hands he is suffering unjustly. (The translations throughout are my own.):

If only there were an arbiter between
us
Who would lay his hand upon us
both!
(9:33)

In the second passage, Job sees God as his witness (*'edh*) in the heavens, speaking out on his behalf:

Behold, even now, my witness is in
heaven,
and He who vouches for me is on
high.
(16:19)

In the third, Job sees God as his *go'el*, his kinsman and avenger, acting to vindicate him:

For I know that my Redeemer lives,
though He be the last to arise upon
earth! . . .
I myself behold Him, with my own
eyes, I see Him
Not with another's!
(19:25, 27)

The second instance of intensification of assertion concerns the very heart of the poet's theme. The two speeches of the "Lord Out of the Whirlwind," whose authenticity and integrity, incidentally, have also been denied by some scholars, are more than an eloquent catalogue of cosmologic and zoologic entities. The forces of inanimate nature described in Chapter 38, and the animals pictured in Chapter 39, emphasize that the universe is not anthropocentric, and therefore cannot be judged by human standards. The natural forces are not intended simply for man's benefit; they have their own role to play in the cosmos for purposes known only to God:

Who has cleft a channel for the tor-
rents of rain
and a path for the thunderbolt.
To bring this rain to a land unin-
habited
to a desert where no man lives?
(38:25, 26)

In the second half of the speech seven creatures pass in triumphant review—the lion, the mountain goat, the wild ass, the buffalo; the

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ostrich, the horse, and the vulture. While they reveal the beauty and order of God's universe, which is miracle as well as mystery, they have another feature in common—they are not intended for man's benefit and are not under his control (38:29, 30).

In the Lord's second speech which describes the hippopotamus and the crocodile, these are not merely creatures outside man's domination, they are, in fact, potentially dangerous to him and physically repulsive to man. Yet they too are manifestations of God's creative power, and He takes pride and finds joy in them. In the poet's words they are "The first of the ways of God" (40:19).

This basic theme underscores with even greater effectiveness Job's confession. He is not admitting that he was wrong in challenging the justice of God; his error lay in failing to recognize that he cannot comprehend, let alone create, the world, and by that token cannot fairly judge, and therefore criticize, its Creator.

The full understanding of a masterpiece like Job will be advanced not by scholars or by literary critics in isolation from one another, but by their cooperative labors and the blending of their personal insights.

In conclusion, I should like to correct what is surely an unintentional error in Mr. Alter's essay. In a flattering reference to me, he describes me as believing "that the 'solution' to Job's dilemma is in the essential act of revelation itself, whatever we think about what is said." Actually this is the direct opposite of my view! I have pointed out that if all that matters is that Job's plea for a response elicits an answer from God, a few lines declaring God's awareness of Job's suffering would have sufficed and there would be no need for four long chapters. What is important is not merely *that* God speaks to Job but *what* He says. The content of the God speeches is basic to the understanding of their rich connotations. To this task, Mr. Alter, like many of his predecessors, has made a significant contribution, for which we must all be grateful.

[Rabbi] ROBERT GORDIS
New York City

ROBERT ALTER writes:

I thank Robert Gordis for his kind words, and my apologies to him for not crediting him with emphasizing what God says beyond

the fact of saying. There is nothing I would want to disagree with in his apt comments here on Job. I would certainly subscribe to the notion of architectonic unity in Job, whether or not a single writer was responsible for every element in the architectonic whole. It goes without saying that the work of historical and philological scholars and that of literary critics should not be undertaken in mutual isolation. Rabbi Gordis would no doubt agree with me that scholarship has often pursued exasperatingly misguided routes, but I certainly have learned a good deal about the difficult text in question from scholarly specialists.

I would demur from Rabbi Gordis only when he suggests that anything in Job could be "not merely literary, but substantive." Because the literary medium is the writer's indispensable vehicle for expressing—perhaps even for discovering—his vision of the truth, one can never really separate substance from literary form. That, indeed, is precisely what makes literary analysis inevitable for a fuller understanding of the text.

Jewish Writers

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"She considers herself, she wishes to be known as, she is, a Jewish writer," Joseph Epstein comments, meaning to define my "point of view" ["Cynthia Ozick, Jewish Writer," March]. I am not certain of the sources of his confidence. Though this declaration has on occasion been flourished on my behalf, I have myself never aspired to such grand self-definition. It is possible that a 1970 essay called "Toward a New Yiddish," incorporated in *Art & Ardor*, has served as the germ of Mr. Epstein's remark, but it is prefaced by the warning that the writer is "no longer greatly attached to its conclusions"—and in any case its conclusions are mainly historical rather than personal.

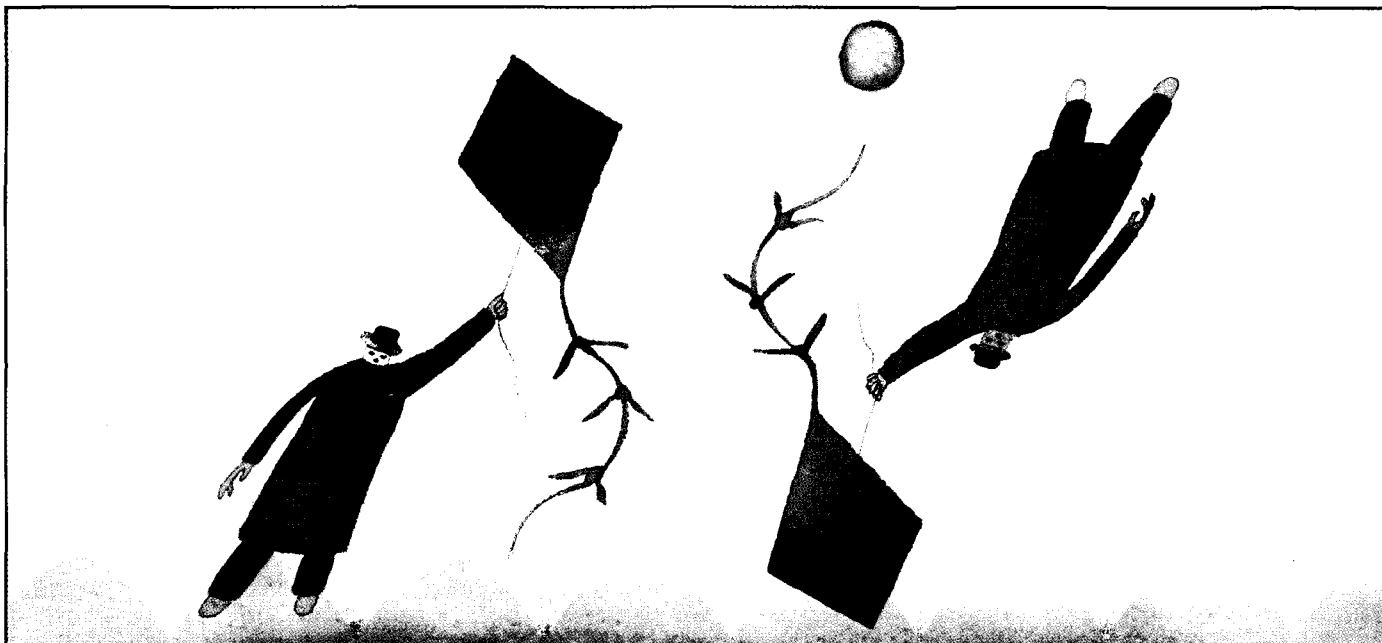
"She calls herself a Jewish writer," Mr. Epstein deduces, "because, first, she has given up 'the religion of Art,' and, second, takes seriously the Jewish covenant and its commandments." But these are precisely the reasons I am wary of calling myself a "Jewish writer." In a 1979 essay in that same volume I offered this reflection: "It has come to me that the phrase 'Jewish writer' may be what rhetoricians call an 'oxymoron'—a pointed contradiction,

in which one arm of the phrase clashes so profoundly with the other as to annihilate it." In fact, in that piece and in every other related effort of mine, fiction or nonfiction, my "point of view" (insofar as fiction does not resist having one at all) has settled on the observation that the free imagination, by virtue of its very freedom, tends to undermine Jewish imperatives, or at any rate tends not to be trammelled by them. The Prophets are Jewish writers; the Psalmist is a Jewish writer; Rashi and the Rambam and the formulators of *responsa* and Rabbi Soloveitchik are Jewish writers. But a writer of fiction?

Writing a short story or a novel is difficult enough without having to take on, as a conscious burden, the chance of ending up as an oxymoron. And the more seriously one is willing to engage the covenant, the leerier one will be of dubbing any imaginative writer born of a Jewish mother a "Jewish writer." Or so I have more and more come to believe.

But there is a more important side of this issue. Ruth R. Wisse, writing in *Prooftexts* (January 1984), powerfully takes up the dangers, not to mention the *chutzpah*, implicit in too much emphasis on the "Jewishness" of writers. "There are many Jews, particularly in the English-speaking world, who turn to writers with just these expectations. 'Don't be only speakers,' they say, 'be our spokesmen. Confirm us, guide us, teach us our values, replace what has been lost.'" "Without religion or national framework," she continues, "Jews seek a satisfactory substitute, and ask literature to do what it cannot—to constitute a Jewish culture of the mind alone, in place of law and custom and practice." And she asks us to "acknowledge, first, that writers are unwilling to take upon themselves the burden of national leadership, and second, that as Jews, they have sufficient humility, historical memory, common sense, and professional honesty not to assume it by default." She calls on writers not to "pretend to be the repository of Jewish values," and to "explain how the artist and the legislator differ."

I hope I have by now endured enough "humility, historical memory, common sense, and professional honesty" to have learned, perforce, to be attentive to these urgent distinctions. Mrs. Wisse concludes: "If Jewish writers can begin to show *why* they are not sufficient to consti-



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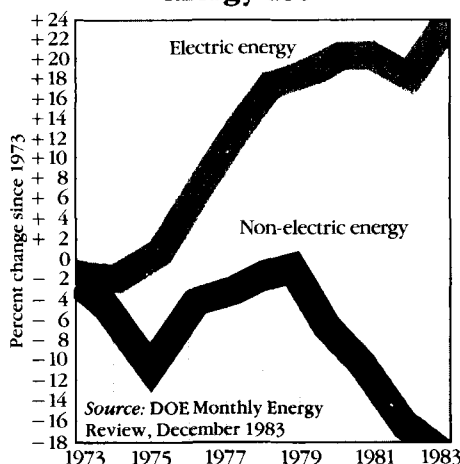
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tute Jewish culture, why they cannot become a substitute for religion and law and national dignity, that would be a great service to both the Jews and to literature." It is a service I would wish to follow her in—to begin with, by not claiming for myself the heavy mantle of "Jewish writer."

CYNTHIA OZICK
New Rochelle, New York

The Democrats

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one who belongs to the "27 percent of the Democrats . . . who describe themselves as conservatives," I would like to comment on Penn Kemble's interesting article, "The Democrats and Their Rules" [February]. . . . The Democratic party has been taken over by the self-righteous (to call them "zealots," as Mr. Kemble does, confers too much dignity on them), and in the process purpose has been lost. Whenever those who are drawn to an idea—religious, social, or political—start setting standards for others based on their own perceptions, whenever they start judging from some "orthodoxy," the conclusions of the moment become set in concrete. Growth ceases, righteousness takes over. . . .

Mr. Kemble says that "Jesse Jackson's intention to offer black convention representation based upon actual votes instead of 'affirmative action' seems to imply that he believes blacks can and should stand on their own feet." Right! This is a thoroughly proper *political* decision, so different from NOW's endorsement of Walter Mondale, a *man* who was chosen early so that the organization could get as much clout with him as possible. So while Jesse Jackson seems to have rejected intercession for blacks, NOW has gone for it like a dog for a bone.

But I question Mr. Kemble's interpretation of the "gender gap" as "another reflection of the general unhappiness of lower-income voters (often women) with the Reagan administration." This presupposes that the attitudes of poor women, who are often family heads, are determined by their poverty. Wrong. Their political thinking emerges from their backgrounds as well as from their present experience, and many women now caught in poverty have come out of solid family and/or social experience but have been trapped by a "woman's" job,

or a divorce, or widowhood and old age.

The Democrats need to stop . . . theorizing and start meeting realistic needs and . . . become real politicians.

RUTH ROSBOROUGH-LAROCCA
Clintondale, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In urging that Democratic party convention representation be based "along philosophic rather than demographic lines," Penn Kemble argues that the 1984 convention is not likely to be representative of those Democrats who describe themselves as conservative (about one-quarter), or of those who favor a stronger stand toward the Soviet Union (53 percent), harsher treatment of criminals by the courts (88 percent), or voluntary school prayer (79 percent). As a result, Mr. Kemble contends, "the Democratic party will be less effective as the party of liberalism."

Such issues as foreign affairs or criminal justice are indeed policy matters legitimately debatable within—and between—major American political parties. Opposing so-called voluntary school prayer, on the other hand, is not a question of policy but of individual rights, which the First Amendment expressly protects from majority rule. One would hope that on that issue, the liberals and conservatives within the Democratic party—historically representative of American religious and ethnic pluralism—could unite, and in the process give enhanced meaning in the coming presidential term to the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution.

DANIEL MANN
Bethesda, Maryland

Israel and the Arabs

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Ruth R. Wisse ["Blaming Israel," February] is on target in noting that the nature of the Arab-Israel conflict has been turned on its head, but I would suggest that Mrs. Wisse herself is not completely immune from the propaganda that seeks to cast blame on Israel. The concluding sentence of her article refers to "five major wars" between Israel and the Arab states. To confuse military conflict with a state of war in this way makes it possible for Arab propagandists to cry "aggressor" each time Israel is impelled to respond to Arab belligerency by force of arms.

I contend that it is no more precise to refer to a 1948 war, or a 1956 war, or a Six-Day War, or a Yom Kippur War than it is accurate to refer to World War II as a series of discrete wars such as, say, the War of North Africa, the War of Normandy, and the War of the Bulge. There is one Arab-Israel war, begun by the Arabs in 1948 against the Jewish state, and that war continues to the present day.

In an interview following the decision of the Reagan administration to remove the marines from Lebanon, former Secretary of State Alexander Haig suggested that their presence would not have been required had the 1982 fighting in Lebanon been concluded by military means (the means, I would add, by which the Syrians removed the PLO from the city of Tripoli in 1983). But the Reagan administration, like every other U.S. administration in office at a moment of hostilities in the Arab-Israel war, moved to prevent the Jewish state from attaining clear military victory. So long as the Arab belligerents are confident that Washington will deny Israel decisive military victory, the Arab-Israel war will continue, with Israel, of course, being held responsible by the Arab belligerents, the UN, U.S. correspondents and editorial writers, and, I now fear, influential neopopulist Democrats in Washington.

DAVID R. ZUKERMAN
Bronx, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her article "Blaming Israel," Ruth R. Wisse overlooks two possible explanations for Israel's failure to counter Arab delegitimation propaganda. . . . Both are based on the recognition that the underlying culture of Islam rejects the right of non-Muslims to individual or collective human or political rights. . . . Islam divides the world into two spheres, the *dar al-Islam*, the realm of Islamic power, and the *dar al-harb*, the realm of war. Muslims are enjoined by their faith to fight on its behalf, although nothing compels them to be belligerent when prudence dictates otherwise. It is no coincidence that the Islamic world is demarcated by the front lines of all the world's chronic wars: Turks vs. Greeks and Armenians; Lebanon; Arabs vs. Israelis; Pakistanis vs. Indians; Somalis and Eritreans vs. Ethiopians; and northern Sudanese Muslims vs. southern Sudanese blacks. Throw in Afghan-

istan and Chad and one has a nearly continuous ring of fire.

Islamic clergymen were very forthright on Israel, Jews, and Judaism at the Fourth Conference of the Academy of Islamic Research, held at al-Azhar in 1968, to discuss the theological significance of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The papers presented included several with temperate titles that one might expect at such a conference: "The Jews in the Quran," "Muslims and the Problem of Palestine," and "The Jihad." These differed little in content from the more accurately titled papers: "The Jews Are the Enemies of Human Life as Is Evident from Their Holy Book," and "Good Tidings about the Decisive Battle between Muslims and Israel in the Light of the Holy Quran, the Prophetic Traditions, and the Fundamental Laws of Nature and History."

The sentiments expressed by these clergy put the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to shame and would have made Hitler blush, yet the Egyptian government was sufficiently proud of what had transpired to publish the proceedings in English, apparently for the benefit of the West. . . .

This brings me back to the two reasons for Israel's failure to mount a campaign of delegitimation against the Arabs. One reason is based on the belief that exposing the Islamic dimension of the conflict would require a campaign to delegitimize Islam. For a people which has seen its faith vilified for centuries, the prospect of attacking another faith must be daunting. So, to avoid getting caught up in the logic of the situation, Israel and most Jews have simply chosen to ignore the evidence and not start down this path. . . .

The other possibility is that recognition of the problem as a fundamental one with Islam, rather than one that is basically political involving hostile regimes, leads to the conclusion that there may be no real solution. The implication is that only continued military superiority will enable Israel to maintain a *modus vivendi* with its neighbors and that acceptance will never come. Such a bleak prospect is a far cry from the dreams of the founders of the state and may be a greater liability for morale within Israel than any gains derived from propaganda successes.

YALE M. ZUSSMAN
North Quincy, Massachusetts

Capital Punishment

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I did not expect—in Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.'s review of our book, *The Death Penalty*—to find a sympathetic response to my side of the debate with Ernest van den Haag [Books in Review, February]. However, I must put Mr. Bishop right on the hanging of pickpockets. I went to some trouble to discover the source of this anecdote and reported my finding on page 249 of our book. The original account is in Charles Phillips's book, *Vacation Thoughts on Capital Punishment*, quoted at some length by Arthur Koestler in his *Reflections on Hanging*. But Mr. Bishop is correct; we don't know how many pickpockets were hanged when it was legal to hang them. I hope his reservations about the ineffectiveness of capital punishment for thieves do not indicate a wish to return to 18th-century sanctions for this offense.

JOHN P. CONRAD
Davis, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph W. Bishop, Jr. is certainly right when he suggests that those who want to abolish capital punishment are guided more by what they feel is the morality of the matter than by any other consideration. He dismisses out of hand, however, the moral arguments against the death penalty—or at least the only two moral arguments which he takes up—as "baloney" and "more baloney." Surely this is a rather cavalier way of dispensing with some very serious issues.

What Mr. Bishop calls "baloney" is the abolitionists' view that capital punishment prevents all possible "reconciliation between society and the offender," thereby depriving the criminal of "his right to remorse and atonement." Other than the fact that I think the term "right" is out of place in this context, the abolitionists' argument here, it seems to me, has a good deal of moral and empirical force behind it. We know, for instance, that some of the most vicious and vile criminals who have ever lived

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have repented of their evil deeds and completely reordered their lives around a new moral center. Viktor Frankl tells us that one of the most brutal people he ever met was a certain doctor in a Nazi concentration camp. For some reason, however, which Frankl doesn't know, the person in question underwent a complete moral change and became a most caring and loving human being. We read similar stories, of course, of people in our own country, including some of the most brutal rapists, murderers, and even members of organized crime, who completely changed their ways, very often in the wake of a religious conversion of some kind.

Even where the change in a person is not dramatic, with the majority of criminals who spend a very long time in jail, there is at the very least a mellowing which can be detected, particularly as the person begins to enter middle age. Man's capacity for remorse and atonement, therefore, is quite real, and is not to be passed off as baloney. . . .

The most important moral argument against the death penalty, I believe, centers around the distinction between the criminal and his crime. In many of the higher religious and moral codes of the world . . . , a key distinction is drawn between a person and any evil actions which such a person may commit. There is a sin and there is a sinner, and while we are told that it is right and just to hate the sin, we are at the same time asked to learn to love the sinner, however difficult this may seem. The problem with capital punishment, abolitionists believe, is that it tends to blot out this distinction. In putting a murderer to death, vengeance and hatred are directed not just at the murderer's crime, but at the murderer himself as a person, in the totality of his being. . . .

The unending dispute over whether capital punishment is or is not a greater deterrent to crime than very long prison sentences seems to me to have little to do with the actual reasons why most people support or oppose it. Opponents, as Mr. Bishop rightly says, are usually guided more by moral and emotional considerations than by statistics or common-sense intuition. The thought of a helpless person, even one who in the past has committed a terrible crime, being killed by state functionaries,

evokes in many a sense of moral revulsion that tends to bias the objective consideration of whatever might be said in favor of capital punishment.

But abolitionists aren't the only ones in whom emotion and non-instrumental factors are dominant. In observing the capital-punishment debate, I have come to believe that many of the most vocal and enthusiastic proponents of the death penalty are people who have not come to grips in an honest and contrite manner with the evil in themselves. They want to kill the murderer because the murderer makes them see a particularly vile aspect of their own being whose existence they don't want to admit. It is not so much compassion for the murderer's victim, or concern about the safety of society, which governs the views of such people—though this is frequently how they rationalize their support for the death penalty. Their real or "gut" support for capital punishment derives from the fact that by killing the person whose transparently evil deed has evoked in them an empathetic awareness of their own evil . . . , they hope to keep evil outside themselves. All such people are doing, of course, is deluding themselves into believing that they are of a purer nature than any of us human beings really are. Here, it seems to me, in this self-righteous delusion, lies the real baloney.

RUSSELL NIELI

Cranbury, New Jersey

JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR. writes:

I noticed John P. Conrad's reference to Arthur Koestler's reference to Charles Phillips's 19th-century book, but since there was no indication of where Phillips got the story, I did not think that he had done much to clear up the origin of the tale or to make its truth seem more likely.

Mr. Conrad should have noticed that my observations applied only to aggravated murder. Debate on the appropriateness of capital punishment for other felonies has been mooted by the decisions of the Supreme Court.

I did not think that the moral arguments which Russell Nieli quotes deserved more than the rather summary dismissal I gave them. Although I am not aware of any statistics, I am very skeptical about the proposition that an appreciable number of murderers who are not reconciled to society or who do not

feel remorse within, say, five years will be so or do so in twenty.

It seems to me that there are better reasons than "vengeance and hatred" for believing that capital punishment is appropriate for aggravated murder. These reasons are given at some length by Ernest van den Haag in *The Death Penalty*.

I cannot, of course, dispute Mr. Nieli's argument that many of those who favor the death penalty "are people who have not come to grips in an honest and contrite manner with the evil in themselves." Certainly the vast majority of us are full of original sin, but I doubt that many people have ever seriously wanted to murder anyone.

World Jewry

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As Norman Podhoretz suggests in "The State of World Jewry" [December 1983], world Jewry may have survived the test for now by supporting Israel in its war against the Palestinians in Lebanon. But it is not so clear that world Jewry will be able to continue supporting Israel much longer, given two increasingly serious problems. One is the continuing divisions within Israel over the nature and form of the state. . . . Involved in these divisions . . . are the following:

- The cancerous doubt felt by many Israelis over the validity of their victories of 1948 and 1967 and their resultant power over the local Arabs (a.k.a. "Palestinians").

- The wrenching question about the nature of the "state," i.e., should it be a secular democracy with a precarious majority, or a Jewish state functioning under Jewish law and principle?

- What is perceived by many as the economic dependence and political subservience of Israeli policy to U.S. political demands.

These fundamental issues go to the heart of Jewish nationalism and Israeli sovereignty and, until they are resolved, . . . support by world Jewry will be crippled and limited to little more than support for the right of survival of the Jewish state, a position which ought to be taken for granted.

World Jewry cannot defend Israel unless the Jews of Israel know what their state is about. In other words, unless Israel decides to advocate not only the rightness of its existence . . . but also the rightness of its conquests, external challenges

to its legitimacy will continue, and divisions within world Jewry will be exacerbated.

The existence of a state and the land it conquers cannot be separated. If the conquest of land was illegal even in part (i.e., the territories are considered "occupied"), then all of the land conquered by the state is open to challenge. This is the meaning of Israel's failure to annex the territories of Judea and Samaria. . . .

The second problem which stands in the way of continuing support for Israel by world Jewry is the civil war between the anti- and pseudo-Zionists of the Left and the Reform movement and the generally supportive and nationalistic Jewish body politic. The "antis" are well-equipped to attack Israeli and Jewish nationalism, given their massive assimilation of Western liberal values and acceptance into both Gentile society and the organizations of the Jewish establishment. Being of both worlds, they often end up as spokesmen for Jewry. However, many are counterfeit, since they not only do not believe or practice Jewish values, they may not even be Jewish. So many have intermarried that we now have the category of "Jew by choice." This is not the traditional convert but one member of a mixed marriage who chooses to call himself "Jewish." In fact, these people and their children are Gentile yet can speak as "Jews." Such people, along with those Jews who proclaim their Jewishness only to gain credibility in attacking Israel and Judaism, will split support for Israel among American Jews. . . .

If world Jewry is to continue to support Israel, it must understand that Jewish nationalism depends on Jews who have accepted the obligations of being Jewish, that is, putting Jewish rights and interests first before all others on the political agenda, remaining unassimilated, and maintaining a self-respect which does not need to justify its existence to others. Only then will Jewish survival become possible, and Israel, as a Jewish state, continue.

MICHAEL DRISSMAN
Macomb Community College
Warren, Michigan

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

I think Michael Drissman is right in saying that support for Israel by world Jewry is made more difficult by the divisions within Israel itself over the nature and form of the state. But I think he goes too far

too fast. Israel's right to exist certainly *ought* to be taken for granted, but it just as certainly is not yet taken for granted by a great many people. Therefore the establishment of this right must for the time being remain the central objective of world Jewry. The issue of "conquests"—that is to say, the fixing of the boundaries of the state—is a prudential political question to be settled by negotiation with Israel's Arab neighbors if and when they ever decide to negotiate. At that point, the divisions of which Mr. Drissman speaks might well become critical. But in some respects for better, and in other (more important) ones for worse, we still seem to be amazingly far from any such situation.

Correction

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In my article, "Memories of the Moscow Trials" [March], I said that Corliss Lamont refused to contribute to the defense of the American

followers of Leon Trotsky who were indicted under the Smith Act in 1941. Having now discovered that Lamont contributed \$100 to the fund set up for the defense of the American Trotskyists, I am writing to correct the error, and to set the record straight.

SIDNEY HOOK

Stanford, California

Plaudits

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As an avid reader I must tell you that I am not averse to long controversial letters. In fact, having much Irish blood on both sides, I indeed relish the fine art of argumentation. I read COMMENTARY from cover to cover nearly every month.

I do think, though, that you should reserve a small space in your letters columns for those of us who wish merely to express our appreciation for the overall excellence of your magazine.

KEVIN M. COSGROVE
Bronx, New York

ROOSEVELT AND CHURCHILL: A TALE OF TWO MARTINIS.



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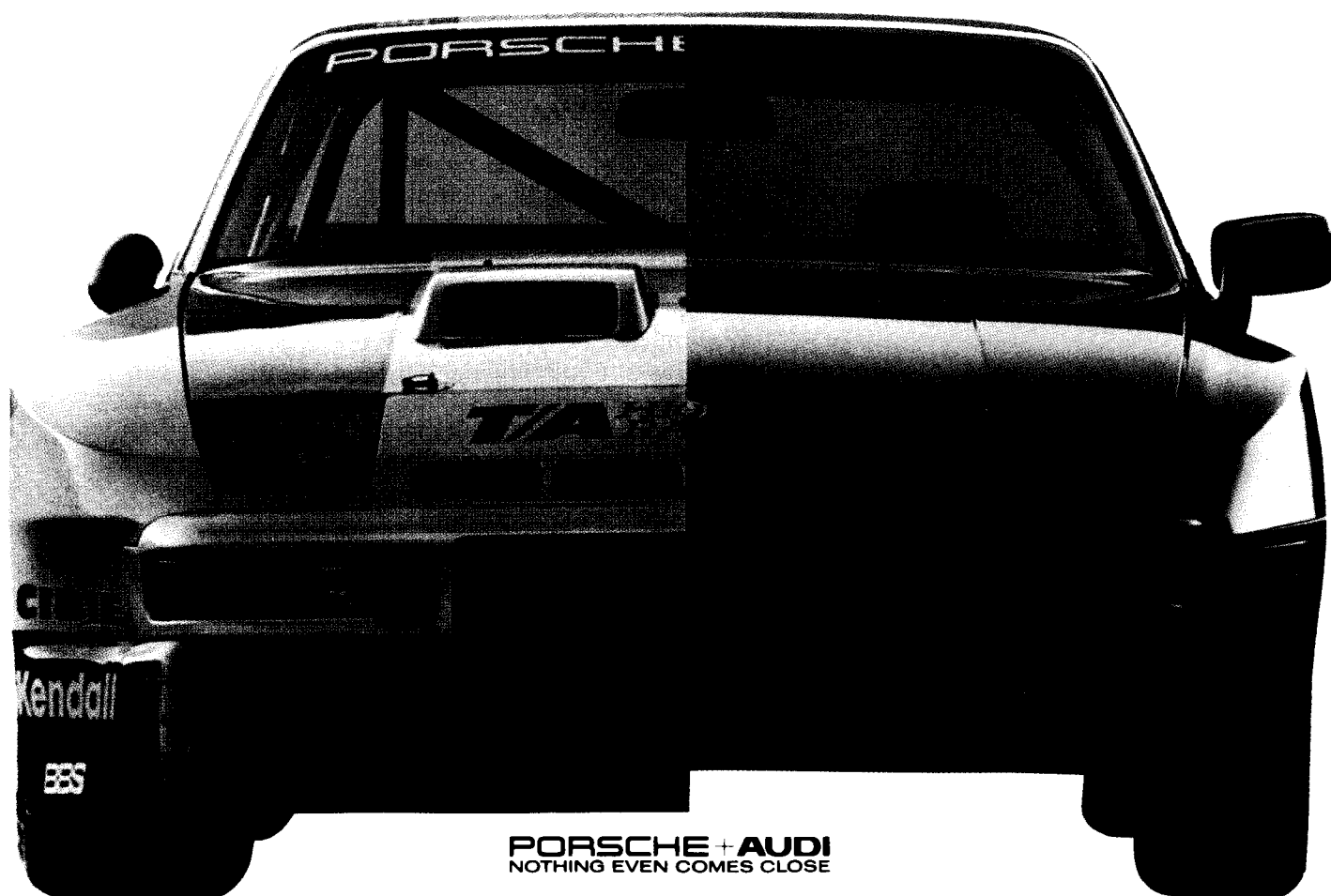
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The Lesson of Lebanon

Michael Ledeen

LESS than two years ago the PLO's military base in Lebanon was smashed by the Israeli armed forces, and dozens of terrorist organizations that had used the country as their training and operational center were dispersed around the globe. The Syrian army was also defeated, throwing into question the efficacy of Soviet weaponry and Arab fighting capacities. The Soviet Union's influence in the Middle East—based as it was upon support for radical Arab regimes and movements in the region—was substantially weakened. Lebanon itself, after seven years of internal bloodshed and terror, looked forward to a more peaceful future under Bashir Gemayel, unanimously elected by the leaders of the various factions in the country's parliament, and vigorously supported by the government of the United States.

Today the situation is almost totally reversed. The terrorists are returning; Syria, thanks in large part to Soviet support, is now the dominant power in Lebanon; Bashir Gemayel is dead and his brother Amin will now obey his Arab neighbors, trying to carve out some margin of independence between Syrian military might and Saudi money; the Soviet Union has acquired new influence in the region; the internecine slaughter has begun anew; it is now America, and to a lesser degree France, Britain, and Italy, that have had hundreds of fighting men killed, and suffered a loss of face and power.

It may be said that Lebanon is not a vital strategic interest of the United States, that the Israeli invasion was a mistake, that we tried our best to be evenhanded and to shore up a Lebanese government that simply did not have sufficient popular support and military wherewithal to prevail against its various enemies, and that we are well rid of our involvement there. But even if all these claims were true, they would still be beside the point; although the United States did not want the Israelis to invade Lebanon, once the deed was done we had a clear interest in the outcome. Yet

after the first week or ten days, we had no serious, durable policy to match the stakes in the region. Wandering from one worthy objective to another, trying to behave honorably, alternately catering to pressures from the moderate Arabs, from Israel, from the hapless Lebanese, and from the American Congress, the Reagan administration changed its policy constantly, baffling our friends and encouraging our enemies. In the end, as so often happens, the one country in the area that knew what it wanted—Syria—prevailed.

THE invasion of Lebanon had been opposed by the United States, but as on so many other occasions, American advice was rejected. Not only was the invasion launched, but it was a most ambitious one, aiming at the total destruction of the PLO presence in Lebanon, the expulsion of Syrian armed forces from the country (or, at a minimum, the elimination of Syrian military control over significant areas of Lebanon), and the creation of a stable Lebanon under a government headed by the Christian groups around Bashir Gemayel. What interest did the United States, having failed to prevent the invasion, have in its progress and outcome?

First of all, it was necessary to recognize that most of the world considered this *our* war. I was in Amsterdam a week after the invasion, and witnessed thousands of Dutch marching through the center of town to condemn the *American* invasion of Lebanon. This was symptomatic of much of world reaction: most people, and most governments, could not believe that the Israelis would undertake such an ambitious campaign without our approval, and most probably believed that the invasion plan had been drafted in Washington (even some Israeli journalists and analysts, who should know better, have claimed that the United States gave Ariel Sharon a "green light"). Thus, the results would be credited or debited to our international account.

Yet even though the U.S. had opposed the invasion, the perception of the war as at least in part an American affair was not so far off the mark. Our ally was fighting with our weapons against our enemies, and the ease with which the Israelis removed the Soviet SAM's from the Bekaa Valley,

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along with the astonishing Israeli victory in the air war with Syria (100 Soviet-made aircraft destroyed to none on the Israeli side), were widely viewed as demonstrating American superiority over the Soviets. Second, the rout of the PLO quite clearly advanced our interests in the entire region, for it struck at the heart of international terrorism, removed a deadly threat to the "moderate" Arab countries with which we preferred to deal, and dealt a blow to the various Libyans, Iranians, South Yemenis, and Syrians who constituted the radical Arab bloc that had opposed American goals in the Middle East for years. Third, the Soviets were not only embarrassed at having two of their principal clients soundly defeated, they found themselves unable to react effectively, even when the Israelis overran their embassy compound in Beirut.

It was in our interest for the Israeli victory to be as complete as possible, both because a clear-cut win would lessen the chances of a comeback by the Syrians, the PLO, or both, and because a thorough defeat of the Syrians, along with the departure of the PLO and its allies from Lebanon, might make possible a strategic realignment in the region. The Israeli victory, after all, clearly discredited the military strategy of the Soviet-backed radicals, from the PLO to the Syrians. The United States had thrown its economic, military, and diplomatic weight behind the peace process as embodied in the Camp David accords, and the leading rejectionists had just been swept away on the battlefield. Under the circumstances, we were entitled to drive home the basic point that those who made peace with Israel gained territory and American aid, trade, and technology, while those who sided with the radicals and with the Soviet Union got only battlefield defeats. In particular, the United States had an opportunity to emphasize these facts of recent life in the Middle East to President Hafez al-Assad of Syria with a view toward encouraging him to follow Anwar Sadat's example.

The idea of an approach to the Syrians was also attractive in the more limited context of Lebanon. For as events would demonstrate, without Assad's agreement no Lebanese settlement could be considered durable. If, however, the bitterness of Syria's defeat could be sweetened with magnanimity from the victors, not only Lebanon but the entire region might take a step toward peace. The kind of indirect accommodation, if not *de-facto* cooperation, that might develop between Israel and Syria under such circumstances could lay the basis for more ambitious initiatives later on, after each nation had seen that the other was willing to behave reasonably, and after the Syrians had the opportunity to taste the advantages of closer cooperation with the West.

Finally, the notion of weaning Syria away from the Soviets and the Arab radicals made sense with regard to the issue that had heretofore been taken

as the central problem of the Middle East: the Palestinian question. The events of early June had shown this claim of centrality to be without foundation: not a single Arab country had rallied to the side of the PLO, and Libya's Colonel Qaddafi—the self-proclaimed leader of the rejectionists and vigorous supporter of international terrorism—had invited Arafat and his men to commit mass suicide. There was no talk of oil embargoes, there was no threat of reprisals against the West, there were no volunteers from the Arab world. (Indeed, the only men who arrived in Lebanon to assist the PLO were from a non-Arab country, Khomeini's Iran.) When the PLO came face to face with its mortal enemy, the Arab world did not lift a finger in its behalf.

In any case, Syria was no advocate of a Palestinian state. Believing themselves historically entitled to be the dominant force in the Middle East, the Syrians left no room on their maps of the region for Lebanon, let alone for yet another tiny Arab country. Thus, if the United States could engage the Syrians in the peace process, it might be possible to address the truly central conflicts in the region rather than endlessly debating the Byzantine intricacies of the Palestinian issue.

To be sure, such an imaginative diplomatic approach is easier to describe than to conduct, and each of the issues is more complicated in diplomatic practice than in theoretical analysis. Nonetheless, for a brief period a window of opportunity had opened, providing the United States, Israel, and the rest of the Western world with a chance to explore the possibilities of real progress toward peace. These possibilities were never tested. Instead, the United States acted as if the Israeli invasion were contrary to American interests, as if the real obstacle to peace in the area were Israel, and as if the Lebanese situation could be satisfactorily resolved and chances for broader progress in the region enhanced if the Israeli forces would only return to their country.

THIS American approach to the conflict in Lebanon was of course not new; often in the past the United States had prevented Israel from pressing a military advantage to the point of decisive victory. But the most recent example of that pattern—the saving of the Egyptian army from destruction in the waning days of the Yom Kippur War—had permitted Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger to separate Anwar Sadat from the Soviet Union. In the Lebanese war, there was no such American objective. So far as one can tell, the Reagan administration acted on bad information and misguided principle. With a view of the war that was fundamentally shaped by the highly misleading reports in the news media, under pressure from every Arab capital and from numerous West European allies to end the fighting, and tempted by illusions of quick diplomatic fixes,

Washington acted to halt the Israeli advance just when a decisive military victory was within days or even hours of achievement. This limited the damage to Syria. The Americans then put out the story, first in private to Saudi diplomats, then in a public statement from the White House, that the Israelis would not invade Beirut. This proved to be another grave mistake, perhaps even more serious than demanding that the Israeli armed forces stop their advance. For the White House announcement came at a time when Arafat was desperately searching for a haven, convinced that only the departure of the PLO from Lebanon would prevent its total destruction. But the promise that the Israelis would not invade Beirut, coming as it did from Washington and reinforced as it was by the Saudis, encouraged Arafat to stay on and await developments.

The military and political momentum of the Israeli advance was thereby broken, the Syrians and the PLO were given time to regroup, and the siege of Beirut was paradoxically rendered inevitable, it having become necessary for the Israelis to convince Arafat all over again that he would not be permitted to remain in Lebanon.

Had the United States done nothing at that crucial moment, two useful things would almost certainly have happened: the Israeli army would have taken control of the Beirut-Damascus highway, thus sealing off the vital East-West corridor from Syria into central and western Lebanon; and the PLO would have been routed and forced to flee the country, without the bloody siege of Beirut.

WHY did we intervene to impose a ceasefire at the crucial moment of the Lebanese war? There were many reasons, including the intense internal conflicts between the then Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, and other members of the cabinet. But one principal and enduring cause of the decision was an attentiveness to the Saudis' pleas, and a belief that anything that was clearly good for Israel had to be bad for the moderate Arabs. It seemed impossible to the Americans—especially once Haig, one of the few American officials who did not take the Saudis literally, had left the scene in late June—that the Saudis and other Arab moderates could be delighted by events in Lebanon even as they condemned those same events from every available pulpit. Yet the Saudis must surely have been pleased with the broken power of the PLO and the severe setback dealt the Syrians, for both of these developments contributed mightily to Saudi security.

On the other hand, no Arab government could afford to make such views public, or perhaps even to express them clearly in private meetings, not even the Egyptians, whose policy of seeking peace with Israel was clearly being vindicated by the war in Lebanon. Any Arab leader who failed to condemn the Israeli invasion would automatically

become a target for terrorists and radicals in the region; it was clearly preferable to deplore the invasion while taking private satisfaction in its results. Thus in bowing to Saudi pressure, Washington was misreading the realities which the Saudis probably presumed the Americans were fully aware of (after all, had we not coordinated the invasion with the Israelis?).

A second reason for the American-imposed ceasefire was the widespread belief that there could be no major steps toward a Middle East peace until the "Palestinian problem" was solved, and for most of our experts this meant the creation of some sort of PLO-led entity, whether independent or linked to Jordan. No matter that with the total failure of the PLO's military strategy in Lebanon, the "Palestinian problem" had now taken on decidedly diminished importance, at least for the moment. No matter that the immediate issue—Lebanon—needed to be resolved between Israel and Syria, two countries that were opposed to the creation of a Palestinian state. In spite of these considerations, the administration, instead of trying for a regional realignment, concentrated on pushing the so-called Reagan plan announced in the President's September 1 speech.

Third was the powerful effect of the media's shameful misdescriptions of the fighting in Lebanon. Casualty figures of unbelievable dimensions were reported and repeated without challenge; accounts of Israeli violence were presented *ad nauseam* while the story of years of systematic PLO terror in Lebanon took months to emerge; American television and print commentators portrayed the war in language hitherto reserved for the Nazi assault on Western civilization; and reports of Israeli atrocities, almost all of which turned out to be fabrications, were accepted uncritically. All this weighed heavily on American officials, who were in any event straining to counter widespread portrayals of the Reagan administration as belligerent. The President and his advisers were afraid to be identified with the Israeli "juggernaut," especially since the PLO had been so often misdescribed as a moderate, peace-seeking organization. The longer the war went on, the greater the pressure on the administration to dissociate the United States from the invasion, and to take steps that would be considered peace-seeking.

Fourth was the by now deeply ingrained assumption among the professional policy-makers that Israel represented the main obstacle to peace in the Middle East. After some initial uncertainty, this assumption dominated all American decisions. It first took the form of blind faith in the Syrians' willingness to leave Lebanon, if only the Israelis would agree to do so. It continued with opposition to *all* Israeli positions, first to Israel's desire to remain in Lebanon, later to leave; first to the Israelis' willingness to engage in joint military operations with the U.S., later to their refusal to do

so. Significantly, the only time the American marines directly confronted another armed force in Lebanon was when Captain Johnson stopped the movement of some Israeli tanks in Beirut (an action for which he was highly commended by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger).

The reflexive opposition to Israeli military success dovetailed with another attitude, this one firmly entrenched in the Pentagon and widely shared in other bureaus of the executive branch: the belief that, in the end, American interests in the Middle East are basically linked with the Arab nations. This is probably the underlying reason for Secretary Weinberger's reported reluctance to put American soldiers in a position where they would have to "fire on Arabs."

DESPITE the opposition to Israel's invasion, however, the U.S. in essence adopted the Israeli political plan for Lebanon: a new government would be formed, led by Bashir Gemayel, and this government would preside over the country. Within a very few weeks, unfortunately, the linchpin of this strategy, Bashir himself, was removed by Syrian-sponsored terrorists. In an emotional response, the Lebanese installed Amin Gemayel in his brother's position, but Amin and Bashir were two quite different men. Where Bashir's charisma and courage guaranteed a certain energy and imagination, Amin was more a creature of maneuver, compromise, and uncertainty. Bashir could command the forces of the Christian Phalange; but the Phalangists did not fully trust Amin, and could not be expected to commit themselves entirely to his side. Finally, Bashir's close working relationship with Israel over the preceding few years would have insured a smooth channel of communication and a minimum of trust. Neither existed with Amin, whose basic foreign contacts ran from Paris to Riyadh.

With Bashir dead, quick action was required to chart Lebanon's course, but no such action was forthcoming, either from the presidential palace in Baabda or from the presidential oval office in Washington. Instead, the American representatives in Lebanon (Philip Habib and Morris Draper) and a galaxy of officials in Washington (now including the new Secretary of State, George Shultz) strove mightily to arrange for the long-expected PLO exodus from Beirut. After weeks of false promises, Arafat and his men finally began their exit from the capital in August, protected by American marines. By then, the symbolism of the PLO withdrawal had shifted from the initial picture of a shattered organization to that of defiant men and women (no longer called "terrorists," they were now "fighters"). Having used our prestige and power to protect the PLO from Israel, we departed from Beirut, only to return a short time later to protect Palestinian refugees from

their Christian enemies, following the massacres at Sabra and Shatila.

At this juncture there seems to have been a widespread American conviction that Syria, suitably grateful for our moderation and evenhandedness, would be only too pleased to cooperate with our overall objectives by withdrawing from Lebanon once we had arranged for the Israelis to leave. Assad, however, viewed the situation in more traditional terms, and had a far more serious approach to foreign policy. He had been beaten by the Israelis but had not been expelled from Lebanon, and there was no sign of any force willing and able to do that. He had lost battles, even wars, in the past, but he had not altered his fundamental objectives, and the loss of hundreds or thousands of his fighting men was for him hardly a major strategic concern. Just a few years before he had ordered the slaughter of somewhere between 10,000 and 30,000 of his own people when the Islamic Brotherhood in the city of Hama dared challenge his rule; nothing approaching that number fell to the Israelis. Once the Soviets replaced his tanks, airplanes, and anti-aircraft missiles, he was prepared to take his revenge.

From the beginning, it was necessary to convince the Syrians that the Israeli victory had fundamentally altered the Middle East. If we were determined to restrain the Israelis, we would have to show a willingness to use our own power in Lebanon. Otherwise Assad, who had no compunction about killing *his* enemies, would inevitably reassert his own interests. This was not properly appreciated in Washington. Habib, supported by others in the State Department, was convinced that the Syrians would withdraw from Lebanon once the Israeli departure had been arranged. At the end of June, the Syrians had, in fact, agreed to withdraw, but that was at a moment when the balance of power had been held by Israel. It was inevitable that as time passed and the situation became more favorable to Assad, this agreement would be reconsidered.

BY LATE summer, American diplomacy was firmly committed to the search for a broader Middle East "solution," as embodied in the new Reagan plan. Assured by the State Department (in the person of the then Assistant Secretary of State in charge of the Middle East, Nicholas Veliotes) that Jordan was ready for a deal with the PLO, and by Ambassador Habib that Syria was prepared to leave Lebanon, President Reagan challenged all parties to take risks for peace. The initiative was a worthy one, but in the absence of any good reason to believe that the United States was firmly committed to an active policy, none of the key players in the region could take a major risk. Paradoxically, the American effort to be evenhanded made matters worse. The United States had been considered Israel's main source of

strength, yet we had prevented the Israelis from finishing the military job, and were engaged in some heated public exchanges with Israeli leaders. Our rhetoric seemed balanced, yet we were not dealing with the Syrians, who held the key both to a Lebanese settlement and to Jordan's ability to reach an agreement with Arafat. In short, we had not made the basic choices, and no one in the region knew precisely where we would come down.

Predictably, then, no one in the region accepted Reagan's challenge. With the abruptness and lack of subtlety that characterized so much of his foreign policy, Begin rejected the plan out of hand; after first acting as if a PLO-Jordanian federation had already been achieved, Hussein and Arafat had to admit that the PLO was unwilling to abandon its opposition to Israel's existence; the Saudis could not possibly take a clear position, and hedged their bets by financing all the contending Arab parties; and the Syrians were not even in the game. Meanwhile, the Lebanese and the Israelis struggled to reach some sort of agreement. Israel quite naturally wanted normalization along the lines of the Camp David agreement with Egypt. Amin, unsure of his own position and undoubtedly baffled by America's attitude toward Israel, tried to have the best of all worlds: a promise of Israeli withdrawal along with the stability that only Israeli troops could provide; good working relations between Beirut and Jerusalem, but no formal normalization that would antagonize the Arab world.

Without strong American guidance and guarantees, Amin could not take the risks involved in a formal peace treaty with Israel, and without Syrian participation, no stable Lebanese arrangement could be made at all. The window for strategic breakthrough was closing, and the instrument that had opened it in the first place—Israeli military power—was no longer available. The siege of Beirut and the Sabra and Shatila massacres were too much for Israeli public opinion, coming as they did on top of more than 400 dead soldiers. Minister of Defense Sharon and even generals of the army were held to have lied to the cabinet, the Knesset, and the country, and to have contributed through their negligence to the massacres. With mounting intensity, the Israeli public made plain its insistence that there be no more fighting by the Israeli army in Lebanon, and this insistence was strengthened with each new report of an Israeli death. If further military force were required to impose a settlement in Lebanon, or generally to advance Western interests in the region, it would have to come from other sources, barring a direct threat to Israel itself.

The Americans hoped that the Lebanese would eventually defend themselves, and that while we trained the mixed Christian and Muslim army, the multinational force (composed of the U.S., British, French, and Italian troops which had been sent into Beirut after the Sabra and Shatila massacres)

would deter any substantial advance by Syria and its Druse, Shiite, and PLO proxies. Here again, optimism overcame good judgment. Despite warnings that ethnic and religious tension would undermine the cohesiveness of the Lebanese army, American officials believed almost until the very end that it would be possible to create an effective fighting force that could withstand any likely challenge. And there was also an unspoken conviction that once the Syrians, the Druse, the Shiites, and the PLO had experienced the effects of the guns of the *New Jersey* and the "smart bombs" of our carrier-based planes, they would desist. There were even some who believed that the mere presence of the U.S. Marines would suffice to stabilize the situation. All these predictions proved false, because we soon demonstrated that while we might occasionally respond to attacks against us, we were not prepared to fight seriously to advance our diplomatic interests.

The significance of these developments was not lost on the Syrian leader. His missile defenses rebuilt with newer Soviet SAM's, his fallen airplanes replaced with newer Soviet MIG's, Assad slowly tested the Lebanese terrain, and found it agreeable. He took control of the broken military units of the PLO, and turned them against the remnants of the forces loyal to Arafat north of Beirut. A variety of terrorist bands, some sent by the Ayatollah Khomeini, some ordered up by Assad's brother Rifaat, wreaked vengeance against their Lebanese opponents, thereby bringing Shiite and Druse armed bands into line with Syrian strategy. Druse leader Walid Jumblat was reminded that his father had been murdered by Syrians, and that his own fate—as Jumblat candidly admitted to some of his friends in private conversation—could well be the same if he did not cooperate with Damascus. While all this was going on, the Americans awaited a response to the President's call for regional peace, and the new Secretary of State, still believing that the Syrians would leave Lebanon once the Israeli withdrawal were arranged, patiently negotiated a treaty between Beirut and Jerusalem that was signed in May.

THE events of the spring and early summer of 1983 serve to demonstrate that good deeds do not always produce good results, and that brilliant negotiations are useless when they do not serve a realistic objective. In the first half of 1983 we launched a noble peace initiative, and orchestrated an excellent agreement between Israel and Lebanon. Both collapsed in less than a year, victims of terrorism against Lebanese civilians and of acts of guerrilla war against the United States and its European allies.

The Reagan plan was rendered inoperative when King Hussein announced that he could not obtain PLO approval for his proposed negotiations with Israel regarding the disposition of the West Bank

and Gaza. Arafat was in no position to save his broken prestige, since his own military men were either under siege or annexed by the Syrian army, and Assad was bent on expanding Syrian power, not handing Arafat and Hussein the right to deal for Arab territory.

The May treaty was abrogated by Amin Gemayel the following March for the same reasons, for by this time it had become clear that Syria would dictate the Lebanese settlement, all other forces having been murdered, demoralized, and driven from Lebanese soil. The Syrian maps turned out to have been accurate, at least for the moment.

Most telling of all, the Syrian reconquest of Lebanon was achieved in direct conflict with the American-trained Lebanese army and with three of the most powerful countries on earth: the United States, France, and Israel. First came the murder of Bashir Gemayel, and there was no response, even though the Syrian hand in the assassination was announced on Lebanese radio and television. Then came the summer bombing of the American embassy in Beirut, and there was no response, even though it was unthinkable that the attack could have occurred without Syrian assistance, and even though the Iranian involvement was well-enough documented for Secretary Weinberger to speak of it publicly. Having failed to respond to these assaults, we were then predictably subjected to the devastating bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut in October 1983, an attack that was coordinated with a similar one against the French barracks, and then a few days later yet another one against an Israeli position farther south. This time there was a response, but it consisted only of quite limited actions from the air and sea. A few shells and bombs could not be expected to impress, let alone deter, a country that had experienced far worse the previous summer, and lived to fight again.

WHY did we not respond? Once again, there is no simple answer, but we must begin by observing that this was not an isolated case but part of a systematic pattern of reluctance in both the executive and legislative branches to use military power in support of our diplomatic objectives. This reluctance generally goes under the name of the "Vietnam syndrome," and paradoxically the disease has proven most virulent in the Pentagon. There does not seem to be a single case in the past several years in which the military leaders of our country enthusiastically supported a military action, or recommended it among a choice of options. In those instances where American officials felt military power was needed, it tended to be civilians who urged its use, and they almost always came from other buildings in Washington. More often than not, Pentagon officials have argued that unless there were a strong national consensus for such actions, they preferred not

to undertake them. But the fact is that successful policies generate consensus, and failure is never popular. The question to be addressed is whether the national interest can be advanced by the use of force in a particular situation, not how the public reacts to the use of force in the abstract.

Of course there are also important and influential people opposed in principle to the use of American military power, even when it might advance our interests. Cyrus Vance, it will be recalled, resigned as Secretary of State in the Carter administration on precisely this issue, and many members of Congress, many writers and broadcasters, and virtually all the Democratic candidates for the Presidency in 1984 seem to share Vance's view. Furthermore, there are strong political figures around President Reagan who are also opposed to military action, apparently believing that the main danger to his reelection is public fear that he is trigger-happy. And indeed, as things currently stand, any President—not just Reagan—who ordered a military action would be subjected to terrible denunciations and would be hamstrung by congressional demands to fine-tune the fighting from the halls of the Senate and the House. On the other hand, like the military leaders, these advisers to the President have evidently forgotten that Reagan was elected in no small part because the American people were growing alarmed over the decline of American power that was so dramatically exposed by the hostage crisis in Iran.

As Jimmy Carter learned to his regret, however, the worst of all policies is to use military forces half-heartedly, and fail. And yet, for many years now, successive American governments have opted for this formula, and achieved this result. It began in Vietnam with the cost-efficiency theory of military power, and it continued with the Nixon Doctrine under which others would do the fighting while we did the supplying. It is also the basis for our actions in Central America and in Africa today, where we are training various countries to resist Cuba, Nicaragua, and Libya while studiously avoiding the commitment of our own power.

This approach has failed on one battlefield after another, and it is unlikely to succeed now. To take the Lebanese case, the Syrians and their proxies were able to probe our intentions until they discovered that the Western forces would not fight on the ground. At that point their only problem was the Lebanese army (and to some extent the Phalange), with which they were able to deal. As one member of Congress wryly observed, if the Marines were in Lebanon to fight, they were too few; if they were there to die, they were too many.

There is one last point about the use of military power: even our much vaunted ability to strike from the air and the sea seems to have been overstated, in part because of an unwillingness at the Pentagon to turn over decision-making to the officers in the field. The air strikes in the Shuf

Mountains, for example, were ordered from Washington, down to the last detail—numbers of planes, the precise hour of the actions, and so forth. Thus bureaucratic habit and jealousy over turf have extended from the corridors of the government to distant battlefields, to the detriment of the national interest.

Nonetheless, until at least late last summer, there were viable military actions that could have been undertaken had we been serious about our support for Amin and our opposition to the Syrian reconquest of Lebanon. This is not the place to discuss such operations in detail, but they could—and should—have been aimed at clearing the Druse and Shiite forces out of the area immediately south and southeast of Beirut, and off the western slopes of the Shuf Mountains. This would have permitted the Lebanese army around Beirut to link up with other mixed and Christian armed forces south of the city, and at least it would have given the new government a substantial zone of the country to manage. Such operations might have been conducted in conjunction with other elements of the multinational force, and/or the Israelis. Indeed, they were proposed, discussed in the White House and in other Western capitals, and rejected. The resulting Western inaction gave the Syrians the opportunity to design and time their actions carefully, picking their targets and judging their effect.

IT HAS been said, by Secretary Shultz among others, that the outcome in Lebanon did not represent so much a failure of American policy as it did an unhappy ending to a fine effort by the United States and its European allies to bring about positive developments. Unfortunately, most of the rest of the world must inevitably see the matter in quite different terms. We had thrown our support firmly behind Amin Gemayel and his government. The President said so; our people were sent to Lebanon to train Amin's army; and the multinational force was supposed to maintain order in Beirut, at least in part to give Amin a chance to mobilize his troops and stabilize the country. The effective collapse of the Lebanese army is therefore an American failure, and so is the Syrian-imposed abrogation of Secretary Shultz's hard-won Lebanese-Israeli treaty of last May. More serious still, Syrian domination over Lebanon has sent a chill down the spines of other pro-American leaders in the Middle East: once again they have seen a friend of the United States challenged by radical forces, and lose. The comparison that immediately springs to mind is the fall of the Shah of Iran.

Unlike Amin Gemayel, the Shah was a close American friend and ally of long standing, and the Shah's Iran occupied a crucial position in American geopolitical strategy (along with Saudi money, Iranian military power was one of the two "pillars"

of our Middle East security policy). Yet when he was challenged by the radical forces around Khomeini, we did not fight for the Shah, and this frightened our allies around the world, who reasoned that if we were not prepared to defend one of our most important allies, all other American friends were at risk.

Reagan made much of this point when he ran against Carter, as he did of America's failure to take on the forces of international terrorism, and he promised that we would be more reliable and more vigorous in the future. Lebanon provided the first Middle East test of American resolve, and it has confirmed the fears generated by our behavior at the time of the Shah's fall. As in Iran, we firmly committed ourselves to a government and then saw that government overthrown by its (and our) enemies without making any effective effort to save it. As in Iran, Americans were directly challenged and ultimately humiliated by radical anti-Western forces. As in Iran, there seemed to be no way we could effectively use our military power to advance our diplomatic objectives.

To be sure, there were major differences. Our commitment in Iran was far deeper, and the challenge to our interests was far greater than in Lebanon. Yet anxious leaders around the world look for patterns in our behavior, and Lebanon recalled Iran and other American defeats in the recent past. In all probability, we shall pay a disproportionate price for our Lebanese failure, precisely because of the background against which it took place.

OUR defeat in Lebanon will encourage our enemies, in the Middle East and elsewhere. It is inevitable that those who form the rank and file of international terrorism will conclude that anyone who kills a few Americans can get the United States to do what he wants. Thus we can anticipate a surge in terrorism directed against Americans, both overseas and perhaps even at home. We can also expect the Soviet-supported guerrillas in Central America to take heart from the Lebanese example, and adopt a "Syrian strategy": keep fighting, and wait for the American will to wane.

The most grateful of all for our failure in Lebanon are the Soviets. Having suffered a most humiliating defeat in the summer of 1982, they then found themselves in the position of a boxer who has been saved by the bell, and whose opponent turns out to be exhausted at the start of the following round. They will not hesitate to push their advantage, both through the terrorist groups that they train and encourage, and through the radical Arab nations with whom they work in the region.

As our enemies will be cheered, our allies and potential friends will be discouraged. It was no accident that President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, no pillar of moral strength in any event, publicly

warned that an American retreat from Lebanon would be a grave setback for the Middle East. No one should know this better than he. For a brief moment, Sadat's strategy of making peace with Israel seemed to have been totally vindicated. Now the Egyptians will increasingly distance themselves from the Camp David agreement and, as the current slogan has it, reenter the Arab world.

The Saudis will be similarly discouraged, although they are directly responsible in no small part for the fiasco. Considered by many an important power, Saudi Arabia in reality is a power vacuum, a rich prize for the bands of marauders who inhabit the Middle East. To date, the Saudi government has adopted a traditional policy of paying off its enemies, hoping they will direct their energies against others. But our failure to fight, first for the Shah, and now for Amin Gemayel, makes it more likely that the turn of the Saudi rulers will soon come.

IN THE darkness of our most recent defeat, there is nonetheless a spark of light. In Lebanon itself, the game will continue to be played. If Israel and

others are skillful enough, the Druse and at least some of the Shiites (those who are not enamored of Khomeinism) will now begin to harass the Syrians as they have harassed the Western forces and Gemayel. And there are still Christians in Lebanon as well, mostly headed for the secure confines of the Israeli zone in the south, but determined to maintain a foothold in their homeland. Syria has won a great victory, but may not be able to enjoy all of the spoils.

But more important than the meager consolations in Lebanon is the fact that there has apparently been an honest recognition in Washington that our Lebanese failure was the result of misunderstanding, above all about the nature of Israel and of the role Israel plays in the Middle East. The revived "strategic partnership" between the United States and Israel seems genuine, all the more so because it emerges after a period of mutual distrust. If, at long last, we have learned that an effective Middle East policy must begin with a solid partnership with Israel, then one can hope for better things in the future. But what a price to have paid.

Best-Case Thinking

Owen Harries

ALTHOUGH the phrase “worst-case thinking” is now an established term of art among international-affairs analysts and commentators, it is generally in bad odor. The phrase may be reluctantly conceded to have some value as a “heuristic device” or an “analytical tool,” but beyond that it is most likely to be introduced as evidence of a pathological state of mind and to be used in association with terms like “paranoia,” “cold-war mentality,” “threat experts,” and “conspiracy theory.” Which is interesting when one considers that anyone who had predicted events in this century on the basis of a general pessimism concerning the prospects of liberty and democracy would have stood a good chance of being on one of the longest winning streaks in the history of gambling.

It is also interesting that the counterpart term—that is, “best-case thinking,” as exemplified by a systematic determination to interpret events and trends, particularly those involving the enemies of democracy and free societies, in a way that denies that they constitute a serious threat—has not gained currency. Indeed, it is not generally acknowledged that such a phenomenon exists. And yet it most surely does.

Consider, to begin with, two Asian examples. Before the fall of Saigon it was widely claimed by Western liberals that a North Vietnamese victory would not result in the subjugation and suppression of the South and that the latter’s autonomy would be respected. At the same time, it was also insisted that the “fiercely independent” Vietnamese would never be the tool of the Soviet Union (remember all that talk about Titoism?). Then, after the fall, when the sandaled foot of the North was being firmly planted on the face of the Southerners, and when the Soviets were establishing themselves in Cam Ranh Bay, there was no shortage of reassurance that the regime would be so busily engaged for the foreseeable future in

“reconstruction” that it would pose no threat to its neighbors. Now that this too has been falsified and the Vietnamese army is installed in Laos and Cambodia, comfort is found in the belief that Vietnam is “seriously overextended” and that it will have difficulty in consolidating its position in Indochina. It can be asserted with reasonable confidence that if and when the Vietnamese move against Thailand, there will be plenty of comment available to the effect that (a) it is an isolated engagement; (b) it was provoked; (c) this time Vietnam is *really* dangerously overextended; and (d) in any case, the attack has no serious strategic significance.

The second Asian example pertains to China. Since 1949 that country’s foreign and domestic policies have been characterized by violent discontinuities, a series of sudden zigs and zags dictated mainly by internal power struggles and/or the failure of previous policies. Given this record, it might be thought that extreme caution, if not skepticism, would have been appropriate in interpreting and responding to the latest major zag which occurred in the 1970’s. But not at all. It was quickly and widely assumed that the “pragmatic” and “moderate” China was here to stay and that, despite the fact that it remained one of the most oppressive totalitarian regimes in the world, it could be treated virtually as an honorary member of the Western alliance. Whole regional and global strategies were proposed on the basis of those assumptions.

Moving to the other side of the globe, best-case thinking is clearly evident in much of the discussion about the current problems of the Western alliance. The new Secretary General of NATO, Lord Carrington, assures us that “it would be foolish to expect in NATO the total coincidence of views which few of us can achieve even within our own national parliaments and public opinion”—as if that absurd expectation were the issue. Willy Brandt dismisses doubts about NATO’s future and cohesion as “vague” and the debate about it as “a phantom battle.” Couve de Murville declares: “That the alliance is in a state of crisis is something which I have been hearing throughout the thirty years of its existence,” and, to descend a little, Hodding Carter echoes him by characterizing

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the current tension as “a repeat of a play witnessed many times before.” So, we are in effect asked, what’s new? The Western alliance survived these sorts of problems in the past and—with a little common sense, a little bit of give and take, and perhaps some minor tinkering here and there—it will do so again. To think otherwise, to deny that it is essentially business as usual, is to be unduly alarmist.

What is new, and what is ignored by thinking of this kind, is that the nature of the three relationships which are of fundamental importance to the alliance—those between the U.S. and the Soviet Union; between the U.S. and its European alliance partners; and between the Europeans and the Soviet Union—has altered profoundly in recent years.

First the military balance between the U.S. and the USSR has shifted in favor of the Soviets, as they have achieved nuclear parity while retaining conventional superiority, with the result that the credibility of the American nuclear umbrella on which the alliance is predicated has diminished drastically.

Second, the economic and political balance between the U.S. and its European allies has changed radically. In the late 1970’s, the gross national product of the European Community surpassed that of the U.S. for the first time since 1945. At the same time the Europeans, both individually and collectively, have become more assertive (though not necessarily more confident) politically, while trust on both sides of the Atlantic in American leadership has suffered a series of blows from which recovery has been slow and only partial.

Third, Gaullism in France and *Ostpolitik* in Germany, as well as the Soviet arms build-up, have altered the relationship between Western Europe and the Soviet bloc. By the late 1970’s, Western Europe’s two-way trade with the bloc was more than seven times greater than that of the U.S. And as far as credits are concerned, well over 70 percent of the Soviet bloc’s debt to the West is owed to the West Europeans and less than 20 percent to the United States.

With these developments have come new political attitudes in Western Europe, ranging from an optimistic belief in the capacity to manage and change the nature of the Communist regimes, through a resigned settling for damage limitation, to outright appeasement and pacifism.

In the face of such fundamental structural changes, only the most determined optimists can prattle on about Dulles, the Suez crisis, de Gaulle, and the “repeat of a play witnessed many times before.”

BEFORE turning to consider in more detail the most blatant and serious instance of best-case thinking—that involving the Soviet Union—it is worth pausing over the example of the Third World, if only to provide a reminder that while this kind of facile optimism

is especially characteristic of liberalism, it is not completely absent from conservative thinking.

Conservatives generally tend to discount the importance of the Third World. Indeed, their initial position is usually to deny its very existence, characteristically speaking of “the so-called ‘Third World.’” In support of this, they point to the enormous diversity of its supposed members and to the conflicts that exist among them. They also take comfort from the fact that Third World leaders often speak more sensibly and moderately in private than their representatives do at the UN and other forums. The implication is that Third World radicalism is all a matter of rhetoric and posturing, a way of letting off steam rather than a serious expression of goals.

Further, it is maintained that even if the notion of a Third World did have some substance in the immediate post-colonial period when memories of liberation struggles were fresh, that reality is fast fading as some countries “make it” and get ready to “graduate out” and pursue more pragmatic and self-interested courses. And last, it is asserted that even if the Third World is a reality and continues to be one, it is comparatively unimportant. Economically, technologically, and militarily it is weak (how many divisions does the nonaligned movement have?) and poses no threat to the West. The conclusion drawn from all this is that the West should be relaxed about the Third World: should call its bluff, keep its demands and problems on the back burner, circumvent it with bilateralist diplomacy.

All these arguments are bad ones. To proceed from the (undeniable) facts of diversity and internal conflict to the conclusion that the Third World does not exist is to misunderstand the nature of ideological movements. The same argument would establish that, say, the working-class and national movements of the 19th and 20th century had no reality—or indeed, that the American nation did not exist today. All ideological movements and entities, even totalitarian ones, are characterized by internal diversity and conflict. As for the private “moderation” of Third World leaders, Ferdinand Mount of the London *Spectator* has probably said all that needs to be said on the subject:

There’s a plenipotentiary sucker born every minute. How many men of good will have been seduced by private conversation with the Great: “Of course, you understand, I only have to spout this far-out stuff to keep people happy”? And how often it is the public words that have provided the terrible guide to future action.

On the question of “graduating out,” it is always possible that this will happen, but two decades after the great surge of decolonization, and many years after the first prediction of the imminence of the phenomenon, we are still waiting for the first example. Even after enjoying extremely

rapid and substantial economic growth, newly industrializing countries like Singapore are still in the Group of 77 and the nonaligned movement, which suggests that they see some advantage in membership (or at least disadvantage in getting out). And while it is true that in terms of most conventional indices of power the Third World is weak, in some important respects it is not. OPEC, after all, was and is a Third World phenomenon. Moreover, the ideological strength that the Third World movement has displayed in holding together a huge and diverse collection of countries and exploiting the advantages of solidarity in multilateral forums is a real source of strength. The control of strategic sites (canals, straits, peninsulas, etc.) by individual Third World countries, especially when combined with the commitment to solidarity, is another source of strength.

Finally, the Third World countries individually and collectively have the power of the weak and the desperate: the power to create serious trouble and disorder, to threaten the stability which developed countries value. When allied to an ideological conviction of the righteousness of their cause, this can be very potent indeed.

As for the policy conclusions that usually flow from the best-case arguments about the Third World, as often as not their effect is to undermine the moderate elements and strengthen the radicals, by making it evident that the West will not take the Third World seriously unless and until it becomes genuinely menacing in one way or another.

WHILE all the above instances are interesting and important, however, there is no doubt that best-case thinking is evident in its most blatant and dangerous form when the discussion turns to the Soviet Union. It is here that the insistence on swimming against a tidal wave of evidence and maintaining a buoyant optimism reaches truly heroic proportions.

Consider first the sequence of arguments which has been regularly advanced in recent years in response to those who have expressed concern at the relentless military build-up of the Soviet Union, and its increased willingness to use that strength to achieve political and military gains in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Southeast Asia, and Central America:

1. Until the evidence to the contrary became overwhelming, and not infrequently beyond that point, it was maintained that the Soviet Union was not in the process of attempting to achieve military superiority. The figures, it was claimed, were cooked or misinterpreted (lots of sophisticated stuff here about the difficulty of comparing apples and oranges, etc.). Or if not that, the Soviets were merely trying to "catch up"; or were reacting to provocative behavior on the part of the United States.

2. As if half-aware that this line of argument was not going to be sustainable in the long run, a few years ago best-case thinkers began supplementing, and increasingly replacing, it with the argument that even if the Soviets were aiming for military superiority, such superiority no longer had political or strategic significance. In its simpler form this conclusion rested on the idea that enough is as good as a feast. However, more ambitious and high-powered best-case thinkers went further, arguing that, due to interdependence and a number of other factors, the efficacy of *all* military power as a tool of foreign policy was declining and being replaced by such things as economic, technological, and agricultural power.* As it has become increasingly evident that the Soviet Union does not really appreciate the force of these arguments, they too have become somewhat less prevalent, though they are still heard (mainly from spokesmen of the peace movement).

3. The next fall-back position has been that, even if the Soviets are overdoing the military build-up and even if military power is not yet quite useless, there is no real cause for alarm, because the Soviet Union is essentially a conservative, cautious, status-quo power which will not exploit its advantage and which fears war above all things. This is usually supported by some historical information on the number of times Russia has been invaded and with references to the particularly traumatizing effects of World War II.

4. Finally, and to account for cases in which the Soviet Union may not behave in a convincingly conservative way and with proper respect for the status quo, comfort is taken from the fact that the Soviets have often mishandled winning situations and snatched failure from the jaws of victory, particularly in their dealings with the Third World. Egypt and Indonesia are regularly introduced to make the point. On this basis it is implicitly suggested that positive action by the West is not required: it is enough to wait and allow the Soviet Union to destroy any advantage it may gain.

And so it goes. Collectively these arguments constitute a formidable—or at least a determined—defense in depth against taking anything but a complacent and relaxed view of Soviet interests and actions.

Parts of this pattern merit further comment. There is no reason to doubt that the enormous suffering the peoples of the Soviet Union experienced during World War II had a great and lasting effect on them. But this does not mean that

* See, for example, Seyom Brown's article, "The Changing Essence of Power," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1973, which envisages "the maturing of a full-blown system of multiple interdependence where power would be exercised largely in the form of constructive exchanges of valued resources rather than threats of physical destruction." When this article was anthologized some years later, the editors noted that "it was considered mainstream when it was published."

the experience had the same effect on Soviet leaders. It is at least questionable that a regime which itself killed as many Soviet subjects as Hitler did was "traumatized" by the suffering of the war. The consciousness and the conscience of the men responsible for implementing the great terror and the Ukrainian famine were, after all, rather different from those of the average Western liberal.

This "trauma" thesis becomes especially questionable when one remembers that, despite the suffering, the war was a tremendous political and strategic success so far as the Soviets were concerned. When it began, the Soviet Union was probably the least formidable of the six great powers in the world. When the war ended, the Soviet Union, despite its devastated condition, was one of the two dominant powers—was indeed a superpower—and its writ extended into the heart of Europe.

Perhaps it does not obviously follow that the Soviet leadership drew the conclusion from this experience that war pays. But it certainly does not follow that a group whose dedication to the pursuit of power is beyond question would have drawn the conclusion that war is an unmitigated disaster which must be avoided at almost any cost. To say the least, fear would have been balanced by an awareness of the advantages and opportunities that war can provide.

A VARIANT of the "trauma" thesis is the "paranoid" argument. When 40,000 Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan, for example, Kevin Klose of the *Washington Post*, along with many others, was quick to explain that the leaders of the Soviet Union were "driven by historic near-paranoia over the security of its borders and convinced of the danger of instability all across its southern frontier." More recently Helmut Schmidt has explained that the Soviet Union "clearly suffers from encirclement, persecution, and security complexes"; and more recently still, Seweryn Bialer has instructed us that, "In an already paranoid regime, the intensification of dread takes place rapidly."

One can see the attraction of the paranoia argument: it allows for an emphasis on the Soviet sense of insecurity without necessitating a justification of its rationality; it also opens the way for condemning as dangerous a strong Western reaction to Soviet behavior (for, as Bialer puts it, "A rekindled sense of insecurity fires an angry and defiant response—a desire to lash out and restore the respect of others").

But the paranoia argument suffers from devastating weaknesses. In the first place it is distinctly tautological or circular. Why does the Soviet Union behave as it does? Because it is paranoid. How do we know that it is paranoid? Because it behaves as it does. More seriously, the argument establishes not what it sets out to do, but the opposite. Not only are the fears and suspicions of the

paranoid intimately connected with delusions of grandeur, but the way they express themselves is through an obsession with absolute security, the manifestation of which is indistinguishable from aggression. It is in the nature of paranoia, as a morbid state, that its fears are unappeasable short of achieving absolute dominance. Thus, insofar as the argument is advanced, as it usually is, to advocate understanding and forbearance for the sick, it points to an inappropriate response. Dr. Johnson made the point a long time ago:

If a madman were to come into this room with a stick in his hand, no doubt we should pity the state of his mind; but our primary consideration would be to take care of ourselves. We should knock him down first and pity him afterwards.

If indeed the Soviet leaders are paranoid, it is in no way reassuring. It does not dispose of the fact of aggressiveness but rather establishes it, defines its character, and calls for a robust reaction, one determined by one's own interests and values and the behavior of one's adversary, rather than by his alleged psychological state.

Another serious confusion is involved in the equating of "cautious" and "conservative." It is true that conservatives are disposed to political caution, but it is not true that those who are cautious are, by virtue of that fact, conservative and committed to the existing order. Or as Richard Lowenthal puts it: "It is an error that a Great Power that is wary of dangerous adventure must therefore be regarded as a 'satisfied power.'" What is at issue in interpreting the behavior of the Soviet Union is not whether it is or is not reckless (no informed person maintains that it is) but whether, on the basis of the rational calculation of opportunities and risks, it is or is not expansionist.

Finally, as to the alleged inability of the Soviet Union to consolidate its gains in the Third World, there is an element—but only an element—of truth in this. The Soviets have had their failures and they have also had, and are having, their successes. But surely it would be insanely complacent and optimistic for democratic countries to base their policies, and risk their future, on the anticipation of a continuous pattern of error on their adversary's part. Great and responsible countries do not make such bets. Even conceding a record of Soviet insensitivity and stupidity, what if the Soviets are on a "learning curve" in their handling of relations with the Third World? Or what if their increased military strength is changing the nature of those relations and more than outweighing the consequences of their maladroitness?

As the term itself suggests, and as the examples given above emphasize, the characteristic feature of best-case thinking is the determination to stick with interpretations of events that deny the need for a response that is in any way painful, even in the face of the repeated and clear rebuttal of those interpretations. The best-case position is usually

defended by several rings of polemical trenches. As one trench is overrun there is a retreat to the next—and the next and the next. Moreover, unless the attackers are very vigilant, over time the defenders of the position are likely to infiltrate back into the lost trenches and proceed as if they had never been overrun. No victory is final. As we have seen, it matters little to the best-case thinker that the different arguments may be inconsistent and mutually contradictory; the important thing is that the optimistic position be held and the reality evaded.

Two questions arise. Why is this kind of thinking as prevalent as it is? And does it matter that it is? The first question is the more difficult one to answer and the second the more important.

Part of the explanation of best-case thinking is no more complicated than that nice is better than nasty—particularly when the latter is very nasty indeed. The prospects of a long haul against totalitarian regimes whose only comparative advantage is a military one; of, at worst, a nuclear war and, at best, an indefinitely prolonged commitment to heavy armament programs; of the periodic need to use force in local situations if interests are not to suffer; of dealing with endlessly demanding poor countries which insist on accompanying their demands with moralistic attacks on the West and a refusal to put their own houses in order: all these prospects are very daunting, and the temptation is great to read events and trends in ways that deny their reality.

But there are other elements too. It has to be recognized that best-case thinking and the degree of influence it has been able to achieve are partly accountable in terms of a reaction to the intellectual crudity and oversimplification of much of the earlier cold-war propaganda. Primitive anti-Communism—the kind that stresses conspiracies and “blueprints” and monolithism (long after it has ceased to be a reality)—has been the best ally of the anti-anti-Communism associated with the best-case syndrome. For it has served to undermine and discredit all efforts to establish the facts about Communist regimes and to argue for a determined defense of freedom and democracy. (To some extent, the conservative tendency to trivialize the phenomenon of the Third World and to dismiss relations with it as a serious dimension of international affairs can be explained in similar terms. Here, too, there has been a reaction against the gross overselling of the importance of the Third World by liberal and progressive publicists, culminating in the claim which became current during the Carter Presidency that the North-South axis was displacing the East-West one as the central structural feature of world politics.)

But where liberals are concerned—and it is they who are the true representatives of the phenomenon—best-case thinking has deeper roots than all this. While one strand of liberalism has always

emphasized pluralism, competition among conflicting interests and ideas, and the importance of the diffusion and balancing of power (as represented by the institutional separation of power and authority), another liberal tradition has tended to deny the reality of conflict in the name of a fundamental harmony of interest, which is obscured only by ignorance and misunderstanding. To the adherents of this school of what might be called universalistic liberalism, there are no real, intractable conflicts of interest. All people, all countries, once they have had the scales of prejudice, error, and fear removed from their eyes and come to understand their own true interests, will see that they want the same things—peace, wealth, “development,” stability, etc.—and that any enmity between them is illusory and unnecessary. The motto inscribed on the banner of this school is E.M. Forster’s “Only Connect.” For it, international relations represent not so much a political problem as an educational and managerial one. The task is to create structures and stimulate processes which will foster “understanding”—in the sense, that is, of promoting harmony, not of recognizing what actually exists.

This doctrine has been, and continues to be, enormously influential in shaping Western attitudes toward international politics. Earlier in this century, it constituted the ideological drive for the creation of the League of Nations and the United Nations. Today, it largely animates the peace movement. It is apparent too in much that is preached about “interdependence” (see, for example, a major Trilateral Commission document, “A Renovated International System,” prepared by Richard Cooper and Karl Kaiser, which maintains, among other things, that “The public and leaders of most countries continue to live in a mental universe which no longer exists—a world of separate nations—and have great difficulties thinking in terms of global perspectives and interdependence”).

There is one other area in which this thinking is both prevalent and influential, and that is in the bureaucracies that advise Western governments on foreign policy. One obvious reason for this is that universalistic liberalism is very prevalent in such institutions. This is not difficult to explain and the explanation is not sinister. For insofar as universalistic liberalism has been the dominant international-relations ideology among Western intellectuals and in Western universities, it is natural that it should be reflected in the recruitment to foreign-policy bureaucracies. Indeed, the wish to put that ideology into effect has probably been a strong motivation in making young idealists choose a foreign-affairs career in the first place.

On the basis of personal experience, I would also suggest that the wish to protect a professional mystique—to reject what is obvious and “vulgar” (such as the view that the Soviet Union is expansionist) and to embrace “complexity”—and the

belief that the technical task of maintaining "relations" should take precedence over the political one of defending interests, contribute significantly to this bias. It has to be acknowledged, too, that to a considerable extent the vested interest which bureaucrats have in protecting their investment in existing programs works against *all* boldness and innovation, whether based on optimistic or pessimistic premises. In this sense, bureaucratic best-case thinking often takes the form of the belief that what exists in the way of policy represents the best of all possible worlds, and that it is foolish to attempt to change it radically.

DOES all this matter? Well, yes, it does. One does not have to believe in Murphy's law to come to the conclusion that the congenital optimist—he who, in Henry James's phrase, "lacks the imagination of disaster"—is likely to be surprised repeatedly by the world, especially when he does not recognize his own bias and regards it as merely a sensible, commonsense approach to things. He will not be able to take timely preventive steps against potential dangers because he will not acknowledge that the dangers exist. The best he will manage will be reactive measures late in the day, after what Solzhenitsyn has called "the pitiless crowbar of events" has broken the armor of illusion around his mind.

By then, the cost of action is likely to come high. We have already witnessed this process once in living memory, and no one has described it better than Walter Lippmann, writing about what he called "the vicious circle of pacifism":

In the name of peace, the nation is made weak and unwilling to defend its vital interests. Confronted with the menace of superior force, it then surrenders its vital interests. The pacifist statesmen justify their surrender on the ground, first, that peace is always preferable to war, and second, that because the nation wants peace so much, it is not prepared to wage war. Finally, with its back to the wall, the pacifist nation has to fight nevertheless. But then it fights with its own armaments insufficient and with its alliances shattered. . . . The generation which most sincerely and elaborately declared that peace is the supreme end of foreign policy, got not peace, but a most devastating war.

At the same time, as optimism is the mother of utopianism, the best-case thinker will believe in, and pursue, unrealizable objectives—a pursuit that will necessarily end in failure but which will not be without its unintended consequences. This, too, we have witnessed repeatedly in this century and we are still living with those unintended consequences.

Both a consistent worst-case and a consistent best-case mentality interfere with the ability to see things as they are. But there is a difference. The characteristic error associated with the former is the taking of unnecessary measures to meet problems which do not arise (though, even then, there is always the question of whether they would have arisen had not action been taken). The characteristic error associated with best-case thinking, on the other hand, is the failure to take measures to cope with problems that *do* arise. The first is likely to be wasteful; the latter may be fatal.

Cravat Jews and Caftan Jews

Theodore S. Hamerow

HALF a century after the founding of the Third Reich, the role of the Jewish community in the history of Germany is receiving more scholarly attention than ever before. For only now that it has become part of a dead past can its dimensions be fully explored. As long as it was still a living reality, its members considered it awkward or even dangerous to dwell on the important part they were playing in the life of Central Europe. Those who did so most openly were generally outsiders, many of them anti-Semites maintaining that the Jews dominated German business activity and cultural life. They pointed to the leading positions which Jewish businessmen occupied in commerce and banking. They deplored the influence which Jewish editors exercised over newspapers, journals, and publishing houses. They expressed shock at the disproportionate number of Jewish intellectuals, writers, musicians, artists, and actors. And they found special satisfaction in enumerating the Jewish politicians prominent in the liberal, socialist, and Communist parties.

Their contention was that the Jews were beginning to control national life, and that all Germans should be made aware of the extent to which their culture and economy were falling under the domination of an alien minority. The Jews, on the other hand, though certainly aware of their growing importance in German society, preferred not to talk about it. They tried as a rule to minimize or camouflage their success. The last thing they wanted was to stand out. Eager to demonstrate that they were "real" Germans, in thought as well as action, they sought to blend into their background, to become as inconspicuous as possible, to prove that there was no difference between them and their non-Jewish countrymen.

The destruction of the Jewish community of Germany by National Socialism has thus paradoxically made it possible at last for the German Jews to come out of the closet. Those who survived the Holocaust emigrated, mostly to the United States, and now they and their children are free to celebrate the achievements which they had once so studiously ignored. They no longer need to insist

that they are indistinguishable from the Gentiles among whom they lived; their affluence and influence in their former homeland are no longer the objects of resentment. They can examine openly those unique qualities whose existence they had previously denied. They can speak of their special contributions to the economy, thought, and culture of Central Europe. The tragedy of the Third Reich has in a sense proved a liberation for the German Jews. They have become idealized and sanctified; they appear exciting and fascinating, bigger than life.

The result has been an outpouring of popular as well as scholarly studies of Jews who have played an important part in the history of Germany. Fritz Stern in his book *Gold and Iron* has written about the complex relationship between Bismarck and his Jewish banker Gerson von Bleichröder, declaring that "Bleichröder is everything that has been left out of German history." Edmund Silberner has published an important biography of an entirely different kind of German Jew, the ardent democrat Johann Jacoby, who began as a reformer in the period of the Restoration and ended as a socialist under the German empire. Peter Gay's graceful *Weimar Culture* does not deal explicitly with Jews, but half of his protagonists are Jewish. The very subtitle of his book, "The Outsider as Insider," suggests the extent to which Jews were prominent in the intellectual and artistic life of that brief interlude between an old authoritarian order and a new totalitarian one. George Mosse's essays have appeared in a volume entitled *Germans and Jews*, dealing with such subjects as "Culture, Civilization, and German Anti-Semitism," "The Image of the Jew in German Popular Literature," "The Influence of the Volkish Idea on German Jewry," and "Left-Wing Intellectuals in the Weimar Republic." Werner Mosse has edited a weighty collection of articles, *Jews in Wilhelmian Germany*, by a group of prominent scholars, both German and non-German, Jewish and non-Jewish. And those are only a few examples of a steadily growing historical literature. The hunger for knowledge about the Jews of Central Europe shows no sign of subsiding.

This unexpected interest in a small vanished community reflects in part the efforts of the German Federal Republic to restore it to life. The

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new generation of Germans which reached maturity after 1945 sees in the Third Reich a national evil whose crimes are not only unpardonable but incomprehensible. The farther it recedes into history, the less understandable it appears to them. And yet they feel burdened by a sense of guilt, by a feeling that they must help atone for the sins of their fathers. For them the attempt to keep alive the vestiges and memories of German Jewry is an act of repentance, a rite of expiation.

Often there is something pathetic about their resolve to undo the injustices of the past. Synagogues destroyed more than forty years ago are painstakingly restored to provide a place of worship for a dozen congregants. Spacious community centers are built to serve the needs of a handful of aging and dwindling members. More fruitful are the attempts to reestablish ties with German Jews now living abroad. They are invited to return to their birthplace as honored guests of the children of those who had once treated them with contempt. They are asked to participate in penitential observances of the terrible events which led to their ordeal: the appointment of Hitler as chancellor, the burning of "un-German" books by triumphant Nazis, or the destruction of synagogues and Jewish businesses in the *Kristallnacht*. German money supports international conferences on Central European Jewry, finances research centers for the study of its culture, and underwrites the publication of scholarly books describing its history. For the Germans this is a form of spiritual restitution.

BUT an even more important reason for the interest in the German Jewish community is the growing willingness of its survivors and their children to examine their historic roots. When they left Central Europe in the 1930's, bewildered, outcast, victims of cruel persecution, their overriding desire was to rebuild their lives in a new environment, to break with the past once and for all. They generally continued to speak German at home because that was the language in which they felt most comfortable; they would sometimes publish a newsletter in German to help maintain their sense of ethnic solidarity. But their goal was to become Americanized as soon as possible.

They pursued this goal with the same determination with which they had once tried to become Germanized, and with even greater success. The refugees who arrived in the United States on the eve of World War II, many of them penniless and friendless, often managed within a few years to carve out for themselves careers more prosperous than those they had left behind. The same qualities and talents which had enabled them to achieve prominence in Central Europe enabled them to achieve it in the New World. Their lives found a new purpose in a new environment. They began to adjust to the values of their adopted homeland. Their confidence returned, their hope revived; they

assimilated. And as the bitter past grew dim, they were able to look back at their origins in Germany. Their initial resolve to blot out the past gave way, with a sense of pain and a touch of nostalgia, to a growing acknowledgment of what had happened.

This willingness to come to terms with history has been most apparent in the children of the refugees from the Third Reich. Many of them had been born in Central Europe; they still had memories of the harsh experiences which had forced their families to flee the Old World. But they had been young enough to adapt without difficulty to their changed circumstances. They had received their education in American schools and colleges; they had served in the armed forces during the period of the draft; they had achieved success in business, the professions, or academic life. An examination of the rise and fall of German Jewry was thus less painful for them than for their parents; it was not as bound up with personal memories and private emotions. Indeed, in studying the German Jewish community they were performing an act of filial piety, resurrecting a vanished ancestral world. Although their interest was stimulated by a sense of personal participation in a collective ethnic experience, they were sufficiently removed to see it clearly and analytically. Their unique situation, as both insiders and outsiders, made possible the sudden flowering of historical studies of Jewish life in Central Europe. Beginning in the 1960's, they set out to explore a vanished culture which their fathers had been determined to forget, but which they, enjoying the security of a new identity, felt free to rediscover. Although a number of other scholars, Christians as well as Jews, joined in the search of the German Jewish Americans for their roots, leadership in the study of Central European Jewry has been largely retained by the descendants of those who had been part of it. They have provided a fuller and richer understanding of the Jewish community of Germany than had been possible while it was still a flourishing reality.

That community surely deserves the scholarly attention which has been focused on its rise and fall. For a thousand years it had remained a small, persecuted minority in Central Europe, separated by a wall of insurmountable prejudice from the Germans among whom it struggled to survive. The legal and social disabilities imposed on the Jews reflected bitter popular hostility to their religious and cultural uniqueness. Their only escape from psychological as well as physical persecution was conversion to Christianity, and there were in fact in each generation some German Jews who took this way out. But the great bulk remained loyal to faith and tradition, willing to pay the high price of their spiritual identity. In this respect the Jewish community of Central Europe was indistinguishable from that of Eastern Europe. Both bore patiently the cruel burden of their ethnic destiny.

But then fortune smiled on the German Jews.

Starting late in the 18th century, they were given an opportunity to leave the ghetto without abandoning their faith. The Enlightenment with its belief in the perfectibility of man, whatever his religious convictions or cultural traditions, held out the prospect of emancipation. Soon benevolent princes and reforming ministers began to repeal discriminatory legislation directed against the Jews, who became free at last to seek acceptance in what had hitherto been an alien and hostile society. For about a hundred and fifty years the Jewish community played an increasingly important role in the economy, learning, and culture of Germany. We can now see that this period was only a brief concluding chapter in the millennial history of the Jews of Central Europe, a sudden brilliant illumination before the final darkness. For those who lived through those years, however, it was an exciting new start; the future seemed to promise the full integration of the Jews into German life.

STILL, from its earliest beginnings, emancipation exacted a price. Those responsible for it expected to be rewarded for their humaneness. They did not demand the religious conversion of the Jews, but they did require their cultural and ethnic conversion. In other words, liberation was to be achieved at the cost of assimilation. The Jews had to abandon not only their dress and idiom, the outward signs of their uniqueness, but their culture and ethos, the inner expressions of a separate identity. They had to become indistinguishable from the Germans in appearance and spirit; they had to cease being Jews in every respect except religion. They could win acceptance only by transforming themselves, by sacrificing their historic identity. They were expected to suppress those characteristics which Goethe, the greatest literary figure of the period of emancipation, had described as typically Jewish: "The twisted fervor, the sensual and loathsome enthusiasm, the wild gestures, the confused murmuring, the piercing clamor, the feeble movements and momentary exertions, and the perverseness of antiquated folly." Only by attaining the lofty serenity of the sage of Weimar could the Jews hope to be regarded as true Germans.

The clearest description of the terms of their liberation appeared in the 1780's in a work by the scholar and diplomat Christian Wilhelm Dohm, *The Civic Improvement of the Jews*. His contention was that by emancipating the Jews, the state would encourage their transformation into "good and useful members of society." They would soon lose their "religious attachment," finding new moral and intellectual roots in the soil of Germany. They would become artisans and farmers rather than moneylenders and shopkeepers. As for the argument that "the Jews will then cease to be true Jews," Dohm declared, "by all means, let them!" By altering their historic character, by identifying in spirit as well as appearance with

their Gentile neighbors, they would find acceptance in German society.

To the Jews of Central Europe that did not seem a bad bargain. They hastened to transform themselves with an assimilating zeal which within two or three generations made them almost indistinguishable from the Christians. Around the middle of the 18th century the way of life of the Jewish community in Germany had not been essentially different from that of the Jewish community in Poland or Russia. A hundred years later sharp distinctions in status and outlook separated the two. The Jews of Central Europe had emerged from the ghetto, they had achieved civic equality, they thought and behaved like the *goyim*, indeed, some of them liked to describe themselves now as "Germans of the Mosaic faith." They resolutely tried to rid themselves of all those appearances and attributes regarded as typically Jewish. Their clothes became more fashionable; their speech more cultured; their manners more genteel. Even the form of their religious worship, the central expression of their separate identity, was modified and reformed. When had any ethnic minority undergone such a rapid acculturation?

The use of the Yiddish language, for example, long a link between German and Polish Jewry, was now rejected as a cultural impropriety, as the reminder of an embarrassing past. Moses Mendelssohn, philosopher of the Enlightenment and champion of Jewish emancipation, spoke with disapproval about "the Jewish-German dialect and the intermixture of Hebrew and German." He expressed fear that "this jargon has contributed substantially to the indecency of the common man." There was still room for hope, however. "I expect a very good effect from the use of the pure German idiom, which has been spreading among my brothers for some time." Above all, he insisted, there must be no mixing of German with Hebrew.

Some fifty years later the young Johann Jacoby, starting out on his career as a militant political reformer, submitted a petition to the leaders of the Jewish community of his native Königsberg complaining of the "noise, talking, and shrieking" in the synagogue during religious services, "practices which have become almost proverbial," a source of malicious amusement for well-bred Christians. He proposed the prohibition of "private conversation, loud prayer, and other improprieties in the synagogue." The prayers, moreover, should be recited, not chanted, by the cantor, while "the congregation should only be permitted to pray quietly." Where chanting did seem appropriate, it was to be done by a male choir of four voices. Finally, a sermon in the German language was to be prescribed "as the most important part of the public divine service." By patterning its form of religious worship on that of the Christians, the Jewish community would gain greater respect in the eyes of its neighbors.

In their eagerness to conform, many Jews even

accepted the prevalent German view of Jewishness. They too came to identify it with coarseness and materialism, with the mentality of the moneylender and shopkeeper. There was something disagreeable about it, something offensive or ridiculous. They began to practice, in other words, a special form of self-hating Jewish anti-Semitism. Their longing for acceptance as Germans led them to reject their own ethnic identity.

CONSIDER the case of Bleichröder, who represents everything that has been left out of German history, according to Fritz Stern. Alas, he also represents a great deal that has been left out of German Jewish history. A man of enormous wealth, probably the richest in Central Europe, he remained pitifully eager to ingratiate himself with patronizing aristocrats who were his inferiors in every respect except status. By entertaining them in ostentatious luxury, he hoped to win the favor of those who behind his back made malicious remarks about the parvenu Jew. Although he must have known it, he continued to woo and flatter members of court society to the point of deferring to their anti-Semitic prejudices. At the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian War, Baroness Hildegard von Spitzemberg described in her diary a "great and very brilliant ball" which the Bleichröders gave in their "new and magnificently furnished house." They had invited "almost exclusively people of the higher society, excluding even their relatives." The baroness found that "really terribly wretched."

A few years later a police report elaborated on Bleichröder's unremitting efforts to dissociate himself from his co-religionists: "Bleichröder, who since his elevation to nobility almost bursts with pride and who publicly no longer entertains his former friends and associates, keeps himself apart from them even in his walks: on his promenades in the Sieges-Allee he walks on the western side instead of on the eastern with the great majority of promenaders, who are almost all Jews. Asked why he walked on the other side, he is supposed to have answered that the eastern side smelled too much of garlic." Such were the extremes to which their zeal to assimilate drove some German Jews.

Arrivistes like Bleichröder were motivated solely by social ambition, by the desire to gain acceptance in high society, whatever the cost. They were not anti-Semites by conviction; only climbers and opportunists. But there were other Jews in Central Europe, less obsequious in manner but more inflexible in doctrine, who turned self-hatred into an intellectual principle. In their resolve to become completely Germanized, they began to advocate the suppression of their own distinctive historical and cultural attributes. Take the statesman Walther Rathenau, for example. An unusual combination of industrialist and savant, highly successful in business yet devoted to culture and learning, he was more than an ambitious climber. He

was an oversensitive intellectual, a philosopher *manqué*. Born a generation later than Bleichröder, he should have felt more secure and comfortable with his social position in Wilhelmian Germany. Yet he regarded the Jewish community of which he was part with a mixture of pity and shame.

Whoever wants to grasp its essential character, he wrote with self-lacerating bitterness, should walk Sunday around noon through the *Tiergartenstrasse* or look in the evening into the lobby of a Berlin theater. "Strange sight! In the midst of German life there is a distinctly alien human race, splendidly and ostentatiously dressed up, hot-blooded and excitable in manner. On the sands of the Prussian marches there is an Asiatic horde. The forced merriment of these people does not reveal how much old, unappeased hatred rests on their shoulders." They live "in close association with one another, in strict segregation from the outside, . . . in a semi-voluntary, invisible ghetto, not a living part of the nation but a foreign organism within its body." The Jews need only look in the mirror to see the striking difference between them and the Germans: "The imperfect build, the raised shoulders, the clumsy feet, the feeble rotundity of the shape," unmistakable signs of "physical decay." This was the terrible legacy of Jewish history. "Two thousand years of misery leave marks too deep to be washed away with eau de cologne."

Could anything be done about what was now increasingly being called "the Jewish question"? To Rathenau the only solution was complete assimilation in body and spirit. There must be "an event without historical precedent," namely, "the conscious self-education of a race for its adaptation to outside demands." This did not mean "mimicry" in Darwin's sense, he explained, which signifies the capacity of some insects to assume the local color of their environment. What he had in mind was "conformity in the sense that racial characteristics, whether good or bad, which have proved hateful to our countrymen are discarded and replaced by more suitable ones." The object of such a process should be not the creation of imitation Germans but of Jews disposed and educated to be German. What was needed was "a Jewish patriciate," based on "mental and physical culture" rather than property, which would lead the way to the gradual transformation of Semites into Teutons.

MOST German Jews, to be sure, accepted their Jewishness with more grace than Bleichröder and less agonizing than Rathenau. Their contention was that being Jewish was as compatible with the spirit of Germany as being Prussian or Bavarian or Saxon. But they all accepted the assumption that the only response to anti-Semitism was complete assimilation into German life and culture. Some tried to demonstrate their loyalty by becoming ultra-nationalists, denouncing foreign enemies and domestic dissidents with loud patriotic fervor. Others hoped to estab-

lish a more just political system in Central Europe under which different religious and ethnic communities could live side by side in harmony and peace. They became liberals, democrats, socialists, or Communists. They were never able, however, to conceive of a collective Jewish identity constituting an indigenous but distinctive element in the national life of Germany. Whatever their civic outlook or social position, they accepted the argument that Jews must learn to adapt to the point of becoming indistinguishable from Christians.

Their efforts in this direction proved highly successful. The Jewish community rapidly adopted the customs, manners, attitudes, and loyalties of the bourgeoisie of Central Europe. Indeed, it soon came to epitomize the characteristic qualities of middle-class Germans: resolute genteelness, moral earnestness, grave deportment, ceremonious courtesy, respect for formal learning, devotion to conventional culture, and a touch of pedantry and pomposity. To the Jews of Poland or Russia, their co-religionists in Germany began to seem strange and alien, rejecting the traditions of their people, adopting the ways of the *goyim*, Jews only in their religious observance, and even there starting to reform and modernize. To most Germans, on the other hand, the conforming zeal of their Jewish countrymen was something to be encouraged; it seemed to promise that what had been a discordant element in national life would gradually be absorbed and assimilated. The Jews were therefore rewarded for their willingness to adapt. A segregated, oppressed, and despised minority at the conclusion of the War of Liberation against Napoleon, they had by the time of World War I become a major force in business, learning, literature, the arts, and the sciences. Indeed, one of the reasons why assimilation seemed so desirable to them was that it had made possible their rapid progress in the 19th century. Now it appeared to be only a matter of time before acculturation led to their complete acceptance in German society.

Yet the goal began to recede just as they approached it. Though adopting German dress, speech, manner, and deportment, they discovered that there was still something about them which did not look or sound quite right, quite authentic. There was always some peculiarity of physiognomy, expression, bearing, temperament, or behavior which remained stubbornly un-German. Even many Germans who seemed well-disposed toward Jews, who applauded their resolve to conform and supported their demand for equality, discerned some alien trait in their character. It was so impalpable, delicate, and elusive as to be almost ineffable. But even if it could not always be described, it was there. It could be felt, almost instinctively, by someone attuned to the inner harmonies of the German spirit. However hard the Jews tried to capture that spirit, it continued to elude them. As they approached, it retreated; as they reached for it, it withdrew. They knew the

torment of Tantalus. But disappointment failed to shake their confidence that before long, in a few years perhaps, assimilation would lead to their complete acceptance. In the meantime, they must continue to demonstrate by their loyalty, conformity, devotion, and patriotism that they were true Germans.

THEIR success in approaching their goal, however, inspired a new form of anti-Semitism in Central Europe. The traditional prejudice against Jews had rested primarily on their rejection of the true faith. The penalties imposed on them, justified as punishment for their refusal to accept divine revelation, could be removed through conversion to Christianity. But as the role of religion in the life of the community became less important during the 19th century, as secularization began to diminish sectarian bias, a new justification for hostility toward Jews emerged, reflecting the increasingly temporal outlook of the age. Traditional anti-Semitism reappeared in modern dress. Jews were now perceived as alien not because of their religious beliefs but because of their inherent characteristics. The difference between them and the Germans became fundamental and ineradicable. It could not be overcome by external conformity or professed assimilation; it was rooted in incompatible cultural and ethnic traditions; it was almost genetic in nature. In the days of the ghetto, Jews had been regarded as a menace because they were so unlike their neighbors. Now they began to seem threatening because they were so similar, because it was becoming so difficult to tell them apart from "real" Germans. Their willingness to conform only made them more insidious, more dangerous to the society around them. Indeed, the unassimilated Jews, easily distinguishable from the Christians, appeared to some anti-Semites preferable to the emancipated Jews, who looked outwardly Germanized but remained inwardly forever alien.

The extent of this new form of anti-Semitism can be exaggerated, to be sure. In retrospect there may appear to be a logical, terrible progression from the warnings against the Jewish peril in the 1870's to the pogroms of the *Kristallnacht* in the 1930's or the gas chambers of Auschwitz in the 1940's. But in fact the rise in the German empire of a polemical literature directed against the Jews reflected not an increase but a decline of ethnic prejudice. There had been little need for an organized anti-Semitic movement in the 18th century, because the Jewish community had been too weak and despised to pose a threat to any social group or economic interest. A prevalent popular anti-Semitism had made an explicit intellectual one superfluous. It was the growing integration of the Jewish community into German life which aroused the hostility of those who felt menaced by the new importance in society of what they regarded as an unscrupulous alien minority. Their

number remained small, however, and it even appeared to be diminishing. By 1914 the great majority of Germans, Jews and non-Jews alike, expected that before long, perhaps within a generation, assimilation would provide a final solution for "the Jewish question." None of them imagined that within a generation there would indeed be a final solution, but of an entirely different sort.

AS THE Jews became culturally absorbed into the society of Central Europe, the anti-Semites found it increasingly difficult to establish discernible differences between them and the Germans. Critics could always dwell on the peculiarities of their nature or spirit, on their alleged materialism, hedonism, cosmopolitanism, radicalism, or cynicism. But the effectiveness of carping at subtle nuances of the Jewish character was limited. That was why the Jewry of Eastern Europe now became important as a means of demonstrating and defining the disparity between the Semitic and the Germanic personality. The Jews of Berlin or Frankfurt might not appear very different from non-Jews, but a look beyond the eastern borders of Germany would show how dissimilar they really were. For there, in the ghettos of Poland and Russia, could be found the archetypal Jew, complete with beard and earlocks, skullcap and caftan, wrapped in his prayer shawl, the embodiment of that ethnic uniqueness which the German Jews were so eager to deny. In the days before emancipation there had been no need to affirm the identity of East European and Central European Jewry. It had been self-evident. But as the Jews of Germany began to draw closer to their non-Jewish countrymen in appearance and behavior, the Jewish community of the Russian empire came to epitomize for German anti-Semitism the Jews' collective distinctiveness.

Heinrich von Treitschke, the eminent nationalist historian, stressed this ethnic incompatibility in an article published in 1879 which helped mark the onset of the new secular attack against German Jewry. The countries of Western Europe did not really understand the Jewish question, he wrote, because there the number of Jews was too small to exert a significant influence over national morality. "The Israelites of the West and the South," moreover, belonged mostly to the Spanish tribe of Jews, which had "a relatively proud history," and which adapted quite readily to Occidental ways. Indeed, they had in the great majority become good Frenchmen, Englishmen, and Italians, "to the extent that this can reasonably be expected of a people of such pure blood and such pronounced distinctiveness."

The situation in Central Europe was entirely different, however. "We Germans have to deal with that Polish tribe of Jews which bears the very deep scars of many centuries of Christian tyranny. Experience has shown that it is far more alien to the European and especially the Germanic char-

acter." Yet this foreign element was beginning to play a dominant role in the life of Germany. "Year after year, emerging out of their inexhaustible Polish cradle, a horde of industrious young men selling pants pushes across our eastern borders. Their children and their children's children will some day control the stock exchanges and newspapers of Germany. The immigration is growing visibly, and the question of how we can fuse this foreign nationality with our own is becoming increasingly serious." Was it any wonder that even the most liberal and generous Germans were becoming concerned about the future of their country? "There is a cry which resounds today as with one voice, even in the most highly educated circles, among men who would reject with abhorrence any thought of religious intolerance or national arrogance: 'The Jews are our misfortune!'" The problem, which "can never be completely solved," was how to deal with the many Jews "who are nothing but German-speaking Orientals."

WHILE to the German anti-Semites the *Ostjude* was the personification of an alien Jewish psyche, to the German Jews he was an ancestral ghost come to haunt their celebration of acceptance. He belonged to a past which they had tried to suppress. He represented a part of themselves which they regarded with aversion, which they had chosen to ignore. Their conformism had brought them so close to the prize. They were almost regarded as true Germans; they were almost accepted as members of good society. Only a few more obstacles, a few more successes, and they would be free of the stigma of their origin. But standing in their way were those Eastern Jews—dirty, crude, uncultured—spoiling it all, reminding the world of what they themselves had once been, of what perhaps they still were. Is it surprising that the German Jews often regarded their co-religionists in the East with the same scorn and resentment which anti-Semites displayed? They insisted, to be sure, that the behavior of Eastern Jews should not be regarded as typically Jewish. They argued that Polish Jewry could in time be taught to resemble German Jewry. Given the right circumstances, it too could acquire education and breeding. But beneath their reiteration of the perfectibility of the *Ostjude* ran an undercurrent of condescension and dislike.

The literary work of Karl Emil Franzos illustrates the mixture of apology and reproach characterizing the attitude of the Jews of Central Europe toward those of Eastern Europe. Born in Podolia and raised in Galicia, he rapidly moved up the ladder of cultural assimilation, his personal life thus recapitulating that of the German Jewish community as a whole. From Czortkow, the Galician *shtetl*, he went to Czernowitz in the Bukovina to attend the *Gymnasium* there, then came years of study at the universities of Vienna and Graz, then a decade as a successful journalist

in the Austrian capital, and finally the crowning move to Berlin, the cultural mecca of the Germanic world, where he remained until his death in 1904.

His literary reputation, considerable though ephemeral, rested on his sketches of life in Eastern Europe, "Half Asia," as he called it, the region "between educated Europe and the desolate steppe across which the Asian nomad wanders." Here there was a strange intermingling of "European education and Asian barbarism, European progress and Asian indolence, European humaneness and the strife among nations and religious communities which is so wild, so cruel that to an inhabitant of the West it must seem not only strange but unheard of, indeed, incredible." Outward forms or manners in the lands of "Half Asia" were frequently borrowed from the Occident, yet "the core and spirit are often autochthonous and barbaric." The region appeared to Franzos in "a strange twilight, . . . neither as civilized as Germany nor as barbaric as Turkestan, but simply a mixture of both."

The only way to enlighten and improve its inhabitants, he maintained, was by bringing them closer to European culture. This did not mean forcible assimilation, however. "I do not wish to see the East either Germanized or Gallicized. By no means!" But Franzos did hope that it could at least be made "more cultured than at present," and there was no way of achieving that except through the increased influence of "Western education." Since the part played by French civilization in the East had so far produced few beneficial results, "I do indeed have in mind here above all the promotion of German education." For only German education could reduce hostility among the nationalities of Eastern Europe, bringing harmony to lands which had for a thousand years been torn by ethnic rivalries and religious hatreds. That was its civilizing mission.

While the peoples of "Half Asia" were culturally inferior to the Germans, according to Franzos, they were by no means all alike. He generally distrusted the Poles, idealized the Ukrainians, and patronized the Jews among whom he had grown up. His "love of truth" forced him to concede that there was "many a blemish in the Jewish national character," although the fault was not theirs but their oppressors'. Any other people suffering what the Jews in the East had suffered would be no better than they, probably worse. "If the Polish Jew has not reached the level which the German or the Frenchman of the Jewish faith has attained, it is not he who should be blamed but the Christian Pole. For every country has the Jews it deserves." In any case, the only defense against anti-Semitism was assimilation, which, if pursued assiduously enough, would produce the same beneficial results in Eastern as in Central Europe.

Franzos epitomized the attitude of the German Jews toward the Jewish community of the East. There was the consciousness of common ethnic

and religious ties, but also the feeling of superiority, of condescension. The Jews of Poland and Russia should imitate the example of the Jews of Germany. They should become less clannish; they should adopt the speech, dress, and manners of the Christians; they should imitate their bearing and conduct; they should remain Jews in religious observance only. Conformity would lead to political and social acceptance, earning them the regard of the Gentile world. There would be less social ridicule, less anti-Semitic malice. The Eastern Jews might even achieve the bourgeois respectability which the German Jews had achieved or almost achieved. Was this not worth the sacrifice of an outworn ethnic identity?

STEVEN E. ASCHHEIM has recently published a provocative study, entitled *Brothers and Strangers*, of the perception of the East European Jew in German Jewish consciousness. Here he establishes a dichotomy between "cravat Jews" and "caftan Jews," between the assimilated, prosperous Jewish community of Central Europe and the segregated, impoverished Jewry of the East. The former saw the latter only as an ethnic stereotype which remained unchanged for a hundred years. The *Ostjude* was uncultured and unsanitary, shifty and cunning, obsequious in manner, sharp in business, and superstitious in religion. The image which the German Jews had of him was in fact not very different from that which the German anti-Semites had. He was a stock figure in a vaudeville sketch, with his sing-song speech, incongruous dress, excited gesticulation, and dishonest trickery.

Reality served only to confirm this preconception. Not even the experience of World War I, when for the first time thousands of German Jews serving in the imperial army met Eastern Jews face to face, could shake their ingrained cultural bias. All they saw was ignorance, dirt, crime, and immorality. Although many of them attended the Yiddish theater, where they could readily follow what was happening on the stage, that did not shake their conviction that East European Jewry was hostile to nonreligious forms of culture. They were shocked, moreover, to find that there were Jewish pickpockets and prostitutes in Poland and Russia. In Germany lower-class crime was a Gentile monopoly. In the East there were not only Jewish bankers, industrialists, journalists, writers, poets, playwrights, and actors, but also Jewish workers and farmers, even Jewish pimps and beggars. There was a diversity of economic pursuits, a breadth of social experiences, far greater than the German Jews had encountered in their constricted middle-class milieu. But all of that remained incomprehensible to them. They were able to see only what they were prepared to see: poverty, suffering, corruption, fraud, superstition, and vice. For them cliché had become actuality.

Only here and there, especially after the open-

ing of the 20th century, small groups of German Jews began to discern in the Jewish community of the East spiritual and cultural qualities which had become eroded in Central Europe. In generational rebellion against the genteel conformity of their parents, they sought to capture the intense feeling of ethnic identity which was still alive in Poland and Russia. Some of them were Zionists, rejecting the prevalent adaptation to German life in order to rediscover those unique collective origins which the older generation had tried to suppress. For them the Jews of the East embodied the Jewishness their own culture spurned. Others engaged in a revolt against their parents which was emotional or psychological rather than ideological in nature. Restless in the bland bourgeois environment in which they had grown up, they sought something spiritually more challenging, something which might be found among Eastern Jews. A few even went native, leaving home to live with the Hasidim of Poland or Russia. They became the flower children of the German Jewish community.

There is a poignantly comic quality about the account of the return of one such youthful rebel to his middle-class home in Prague after a stay in a Galician *shtetl*. His brother recalls that the father announced, "with a note of horror in his voice," that the wanderer had just come back. "I understood what had filled him with dread as soon as I saw my brother." There he stood, "in a frayed, black overcoat, clipped like a caftan, reaching from his chin to the ground." On his head was a broad, round hat of black velvet pushed back to the neck. He was stooped, his face was covered with a red beard, "and side whiskers in front of his ears hung in ringlets down to his shoulders." His manner had become as strange as his appearance. He no longer washed his hands before each meal, "as any God-fearing and hygienically-minded person would do." Instead, he made it a symbolic act, "pouring water alternately on to his two palms from a cup." He refused to shake hands with women, and whenever he spoke to one, he would turn his back to her. "He said his prayers aloud, in a singsong voice, running round the room in a sort of trance." Even the kosher food in the restaurants of Prague now seemed suspect to him. In short, the writer concludes, "my brother had not come back from Belz [in Galicia] to home and civilization; he had brought Belz with him."

Still, German Jewish rebels of this sort, who idealized and sentimentalized the Jewry of Eastern Europe, were only engaging in what the historian James Joll has called "a watery *salon* mysticism." They did not really understand it any better than those who saw in it only poverty and ignorance. Both were blinded by ethnic stereotypes and clichés. The truth is that the Germans—Jews and non-Jews alike—clung to their preconception of Jewish life in the East because it helped them maintain a more agreeable view of themselves. Their image of the *Ostjude* reinforced their feeling

of superiority; it served to define those qualities of mind and spirit which made them better. They could not gain a deeper understanding of what he was in actuality without sacrificing cherished assumptions about their own identity. It was psychologically important to them to see only the skullcap and prayer shawl, the dirt and privation, the coarseness and superstition, the servility and dishonesty. A clearer insight might have threatened their self-esteem.

YET in point of fact the dichotomy of "cravat Jews" and "caftan Jews" is largely fictitious. It distorts reality. The truth is that in the second half of the 19th century Eastern Jewry entered a period of far-reaching change similar in many respects to that which German Jewry had experienced fifty years before. What emerged out of the process of cultural readjustment was fundamentally different, to be sure, but the Jewish community in Poland and Russia could no longer be accurately characterized by familiar platitudes about caftan and earlocks. Urbanization and secularization had begun to undermine the traditional religious foundations of Jewish life. Although the old faith retained much of its force, it was now being increasingly challenged by new creeds and allegiances. Some Eastern Jews, for example, began to follow the same path as the German Jews, speaking only Russian or Polish, looking and behaving like Gentiles, sometimes even converting to Christianity. If the Jewish soldiers in the German army during World War I had only looked, they could have found in any city or town in the East, among the physicians, lawyers, engineers, and businessmen, assimilated Jews like themselves, Western in dress, manner, and outlook. There were "cravat Jews" in Eastern Europe no less than in Central Europe, sharing the same eagerness to gain acceptance through conformity and acculturation.

More important, however, were the hundreds of thousands of Jews who began to leave the hamlets and villages of the East for the big cities, where industrialization and modernization promised a more rewarding existence. In the teeming slums of Warsaw, Lodz, Minsk, or Vilna, the familiar bonds of religion tended to weaken and unravel. Some of the migrants to urban centers turned to traditional pursuits; they became shopkeepers, tradesmen, peddlers, and hucksters. Others formed a Jewish intelligentsia which sought to create a sense of ethnic identity resting on secular rather than religious values. Most of them, however, became workers in the mills and factories of the rapidly industrializing Russian empire. They constituted a new Jewish proletariat, enduring the same collective privation and responding with the same organized militancy as the working classes in other parts of Europe. They became democrats, socialists, anarchists, or Zionists. There was a sense of excitement, of change, of hope and promise in

the Jewish community of Eastern Europe around the turn of the century which cannot be captured by platitudes about "caftan Jews." A way of life which had remained unchanged for centuries was suddenly becoming modernized and transformed, searching for new forms and responding to new challenges.

Out of this ferment was born a different perception of ethnic destiny. There emerged for the first time the concept of a secular Jewish culture the vehicle of which should be the Yiddish language. Within a generation Eastern Jewry produced a vigorous intellectual movement comprising Yiddish novelists and poets, journalists and literary critics, historians and sociologists, playwrights and actors, even artists and musicians, whose medium may have been universal, but whose inspiration was the life of their community. Industrialization and urbanization, moreover, engendered a new social consciousness among Jewish workers, who played an important part in the political struggles, in the demonstrations, strikes, and uprisings, of the last years of Russian czarism. The overall result was a fundamental change in the way of life of the Jews of Eastern Europe. That change can already be perceived in the works of Sholem Aleichem; it is even more apparent in the writings of Isaac Leib Peretz; and it forms the central theme of such later novels as Sholem Asch's *Three Cities* or Israel Joshua Singer's *The Brothers Ashkenazi*. For about sixty years, from the end of the 1870's to the outbreak of World War II, Eastern Jewry went through a transformation as intense and profound as that which German Jewry had experienced at the beginning of the 19th century.

There were important differences, however. For the Jews of Central Europe conformity had become the road to emancipation. By adopting the language, manner, and outlook of the Germans, they sought to fuse and identify with them. The Eastern Jews, on the other hand, were guided by a different concept of ethnic destiny. To them assimilation seemed impracticable. For one thing, there were simply too many of them. For another, their language, appearance, bearing, and outlook distinguished them indelibly from the Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, and Rumanians among whom they lived. But most important, they felt too attached to a distinctive Jewish culture, whether religious or secular, to forsake it for political or social acceptance. To them the assimilated German Jews, so un-Jewish in their comportment, with their genteel airs and cultivated manners, seemed faintly comical. What they sought was something different: a recognition that they constituted a distinct ethnic nationality within the complex of peoples and cultures in Eastern Europe.

They were admittedly unlike the others in that they did not comprise a majority in any single country or region. But that did not seem an insurmountable obstacle. After all, there were Ukrainians in Poland, Poles in Lithuania, Serbs in Hun-

gary, and Rumanians in Russia. Why should there not be Jews scattered in various parts of the East, but forming a single separate national group with its own speech, dress, and tradition? In Germany, where political unity and cultural uniformity had become sacred goals, the acceptance of distinct but equal nationalities, whether Polish, French, Danish, or Jewish, was clearly impossible. Here assimilation was the supreme civic virtue. But in Poland or Russia, where cultural diversity was a familiar reality, an autonomous Jewish community with rights and freedoms of its own seemed attainable. Its establishment became in fact a common goal of the Eastern Jewish community in the last years of its existence.

WORLD WAR II put a tragic end to both solutions to "the Jewish question." The Holocaust showed how inadequate either cultural assimilation or ethnic separateness was as a weapon against anti-Semitism. The extermination of the Jewry of Central Europe as well as Eastern Europe is proof of that. And yet in historical memory the two have been treated quite differently. The German Jews have come to enjoy a posthumous cultural renaissance; there is a continuing popular interest in their struggles and accomplishments. The distinctiveness which they had sought to deny has proved a source of strength, a focus of attention. Their destruction as an organized community has eliminated the need to maintain that they were indistinguishable from the Germans. Indeed, the interest in their history derives largely from the perception that they were in reality different, that they contributed something distinctive to the culture of which they were part. The Jews of Eastern Europe, on the other hand, have been largely forgotten or, worse still, reduced to platitudes and stereotypes. They appear now as quaintly pious residents of the *shtetl*, accustomed to poverty, resigned to oppression, obedient to tradition, loyal to their community, and faithful to their God. Even when one of the classics of Yiddish literature is brought to the stage or screen, the rich diversity of the life of Eastern Jews is lost in picturesqueness and exoticism, in a swirl of beards, earlocks, caftans, and *tsitsith*. Reality is drowned in filial piety or sugary sentimentality.

How are we to explain these differing perceptions of two Jewish communities which have suffered the same tragic fate? It is clear, to begin with, that the assimilation pursued by the Jews of Central Europe has produced at least one of the results they sought. By identifying with an alien but vigorous culture, they insured that their contribution to it would survive their destruction. To the extent that German thought, learning, literature, music, and art continue to be studied and appreciated, the memory of German Jewry remains alive. And since the German language is familiar beyond as well as within Central Europe, the ac-

complishments of the German Jews have been immortalized in the cultural life of a people which had scorned them during their lifetime. The Germans themselves, moreover, seeking to atone for the sins of yesterday, are now celebrating the Jewish community which their fathers destroyed. For them it is an act of contrition, a rite of national redemption.

But in Eastern Europe the situation is different. There the determination of the Jews to maintain a culture of their own, to preserve a separate ethnic identity, meant that their spiritual obliteration was the inescapable consequence of their physical destruction. There had been some assimilated Jews, to be sure, who made an important contribution to the cultural life of Poland and Russia, but the Poles and Russians prefer not to dwell on their Jewishness. As for the many more who clung to their historic distinctiveness, they are now forgotten along with the unique spiritual values they had sought to maintain. The countries of Eastern Europe show little interest in the Jewish culture which had once flourished in their midst. When they recall the terrible fate of the Jews, they perceive it as one more item in the long catalogue of barbarities committed by National Socialism. For them the Jewish tragedy is part of the Polish, Russian, or Ukrainian tragedy. Even when commemorating some especially moving episode in the destruction of Eastern Jewry—the uprising of the Warsaw ghetto, for example—they tend to politicize and ideologize, ignoring its specific ethnic character. The Jewish community of the East has not only been annihilated but forgotten in the lands where it had existed for more than five hundred years.

In Israel, whose creation their agony helped make possible, sympathy or understanding for the Jews of Eastern Europe is not much greater. The new virile Jewish state sees in them the tragic legacy of the Diaspora, a community crippled by persecution and humiliation. They seem to embody all those qualities—obsequiousness, passivity, dissimulation, and overintellectuality—which twenty centuries of oppression had bred in a people torn from its historic roots. Yiddish, the language of that physical and spiritual exile, is tolerated but not encouraged. A nation restored to its ancient greatness requires a different idiom, the heroic biblical idiom of David and Solomon. Some of the surviving Eastern Jews in Israel continue to use the familiar speech of their childhood, but their sons and daughters have become adapted to a new way of life whose vehicle is Hebrew. In the Jewish state Yiddish remains the language of an exile culture no less than during the period when it flowered among hostile Christians in Eastern Europe. It is perceived as expressing the spirit of resignation of a people waiting to be reborn, yearning for deliver-

ance from Egypt. It appears out of place in the ancestral home of Israel.

THE world of Eastern Jewry has been largely forgotten even in the United States, where most of its descendants have settled. They may still retain fond memories of their immigrant parents or grandparents, who crossed the Atlantic in steerage, passed through Ellis Island, and settled on the East Side to carve out a better life for themselves and their children. But their recollection rarely extends beyond the Jewish experience in the New World. They remember the warmth of the parental home, its hopes and ambitions, privations and achievements, all suffused with nostalgia. They remember the grave paternal piety, the generous maternal bosom, the close community of relatives and friends, the struggling, adapting, learning, and succeeding. This is the great ethnic saga which has been so affectionately told in Irving Howe's *World of Our Fathers*. But what about the life of those immigrant forebears before they came to the New World? Here the memory of American Jewry stops short. Familiarity with the language and culture of the Jewish community of Eastern Europe is essential for an understanding of its way of life. Most Jews in the United States, however, know little Yiddish beyond a few slang phrases. For them it is only a jargon, pungent and amusing perhaps, though hardly worth serious study. A knowledge of Polish or Russian can also be useful for an understanding of the Jewry of Eastern Europe. But who studies Polish in this country except a handful of young Polish Americans searching for ethnic roots? While interest in the Russian language is greater, those who master it are generally attracted to more glamorous subjects than Russia's dwindling Jewish minority. A long, important chapter in the history of the Jews is thus becoming neglected and forgotten.

This is the real tragedy of East European Jewry. Its annihilation as an organized community is an unalterable reality which must be accepted. Even the fading of its memory, the obliteration of its values and aspirations, appears to be an irreversible historical process. Its spirit was too distinctive, too reflective of a uniquely Jewish experience, to survive its physical destruction, as the spirit of German Jewry has survived. But at least we should not distort it by caricature or stereotype. We should not ignore its diversity and multiformity, its vigor and boldness, its inward steadfastness in the face of bitter adversity. The culture of the Jews of Eastern Europe has vanished along with the world they had created. But they remain part of Jewish history, indeed, of human history. We should remember them with respect based on a true understanding of what they were. That is a moral obligation which the living surely owe to the dead.

Homage to Raymond Aron

Scott McConnell

RAYMOND ARON, who died in Paris last October at the age of seventy-eight, was one of the great intellectuals of Europe's liberal tradition, and France's most lucid political writer in this century. An extraordinarily versatile scholar—he was at once philosopher, historian, and sociologist—Aron was also a prolific commentator on contemporary politics. As a political columnist for *Le Figaro* and later for *L'Express*, Aron helped to shape the sensibilities of a generation of moderate French politicians; as a polemical essayist, he was one of postwar Europe's clearest and most powerful voices—perhaps the most powerful—for reason, for moderation, and for firmness in the defense of political liberty.

For much of the past decade it has been common parlance in France to describe Aron as the one eminent intellectual of his generation who did not fall into grievous errors on the major public issues. His memoirs, published only weeks before his death, were enthusiastically received, and rose at once to the top of the French best-seller lists—one further sign that Raymond Aron had moved to the center of public esteem.

He was not always so appreciated. For most of his career, Aron was at odds with the prevailing intellectual temper in France, his views largely rejected. "Better wrong with Sartre than right with Aron," was long a catchword in French Left circles; Jean-Paul Sartre, who had been Aron's close friend and a fellow student of German phenomenology during the 1930's, after their passage through the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, eventually found Aron's anti-Communism intolerable, and added his own insults. Characteristically, Aron replied with irony and with critiques of Sartre's philosophical works that were both incisive and good-natured. At the end of his life, Aron was hailed not only for being consistently right, but for puncturing the ideological constructions of his opponents with a remarkable fairness, for raising ideological debate in France to a higher level.

Raymond Aron's achievements were diverse, and his battle against totalitarianism was only one

element of his life's work. But it was a central one. Aron was marked for life by his experience as a young teacher in Germany during Hitler's rise to power; thereafter he never ceased to feel the fragility of the regimes that embodied liberal values.

When he returned to France after World War II (he had joined the Gaullists in London in 1940, and edited a Resistance journal), he recognized right away that the extension of Soviet power into the center of Europe and the strength and ambition of the West European Communist parties demanded from West Europeans a fundamental and unavoidable political choice: they could either be for the continued extension of Communist revolution or against it. No intellectual in the postwar era contributed more wise teaching or more incisive analysis to the questions of what that choice meant and what were the prudent and realistic policies it implied.

The point of departure for Aron's analysis of industrial society was that both Communist and liberal democratic regimes claimed many of the same values: economic growth, the rejection of hereditary inequalities, universal citizenship. To Aron, this suggested that specific aspects of life under each type of regime—the standard of living of the various classes, the choices open to individuals, the forms of class struggle—could be the subject of objective comparison, which he undertook in his sociological trilogy *Eighteen Lessons on Industrial Society, Class Struggle, and Democracy and Totalitarianism* (given as courses at the Sorbonne from 1955 to 1958 and published 1962-66).

In using Marxist concepts (such as class struggle) Aron was paying his respects to a thinker whose genius he respected, whose good intentions he acknowledged, and whose work he came back to again and again throughout his life. He had begun his own study of Marx in the early 1930's, well before most of his contemporaries in France; he knew very well what he was rejecting.

Aron argued (in *Main Currents of Sociological Thought*, 1960-62) that out of Marx's prophetic vision of history there flowed, quite naturally, political tragedy. To imagine, as Marx had, that the working class could take over the dominant functions within capitalist society in a manner analo-

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gous to the rise to power of the commercial bourgeoisie during the 18th century was, Aron maintained, to engage in an exercise in prophecy rather than sociology. The position and nature of the two classes differed in all essentials: one was a privileged minority which had created new ways of organizing production within feudal society; the other, an underprivileged majority, was compelled to submit to a production system directed by a ruling elite of capitalists and managers. Marx, then, had placed at the center of his theory of history an analogy of such sociological implausibility that it could be resolved only by myth—a myth which Lenin would come along to provide: that the Communist party *represented* the proletariat in the fulfillment of its historic mission.

Aron objected to another central tenet of Marx's sociology: the contention that a society's political order was essentially no more than a reflection of its economic order—the state simply an instrument of class domination. He thought that Marx was wrong to be uninterested in such questions as how a society's leaders were chosen, what the limits were to their powers, or what their relation was to the governed; he felt that the answers to these sorts of questions told as much about the public and private life of a society as did its economic structure.

In his own sociological approach, Aron proceeded in the tradition of the great French political sociologists, Montesquieu and Tocqueville, accepting from them the idea that a society's political regime was a decisive variable in determining its nature. Indeed, he was in great part responsible for reestablishing, in France, Tocqueville's reputation as a political thinker of the highest order, and Aron adopted into the core of his own sociological vision the implications of Tocqueville's analysis of social change.

Tocqueville had argued that the breakdown of the aristocratic hierarchy of the past and the growing equality in conditions of status were the main driving force behind the sociological transformations of the 19th century. He thought it obvious that an increasingly egalitarian, democratic, and commercial society would involve a growth in the power of the state; he was haunted by the question of whether this enhanced state would permit men to remain politically free or deteriorate into a despotism of enforced conformity.

This was the Tocquevillian choice that shaped the contours of Aron's own analysis. Both the Communist states and the liberal democracies were variants of "industrial society," and "democratic" by virtue of universal citizenship and the rejection of hereditary elites. Yet they differed profoundly, not primarily because of their economic structures but because of the nature of their political regimes. In proclaiming that "the primordial values of the community" can be discerned in "the antithesis between the single party and parliamentary institutions, between the imposed orthodoxy and intellectual pluralism," Aron was defining both his own

sociological method and the values which underlay his political commitments.

THESE values Aron had explicated in his polemical classic, *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, published in 1955. The work was a sustained critique of the largely Marxist intellectual climate in postwar France. The best-known of the French philosophers, Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, denied nothing about the Gulag Archipelago. But the problem was that their elaborate justification of their hopes for *another* kind of Communist revolution had effectively permeated the French intellectual atmosphere with a remarkable indulgence toward Stalinism. In this climate, Alfred Sauvy, a noted economic writer, was not expressing an aberrant view when he proclaimed (in 1949) that "in a nation where Communism is introduced by violence, all opinion will be Communist in a generation, so to announce that it is so now is only an anticipation of the truth." Merleau-Ponty worried that if Marxism were shown to be false, history would have no meaning; Sartre argued that the only way to favor the French working class was to take the side of the Soviet Union.

Out of this morass of troubled rationalizations and cheerful sophistry, Aron dissected the essential "myths" of the historical unity of the Left and the revolutionary vocation of the proletariat. He noted that French intellectuals generally had little interest in the study of what economic policies might actually improve the living standards of the French working class, and he set forth his own interpretation of the sources of Marxism's appeal:

In Marxist eschatology, the proletariat is cast in the role of collective savior. The expressions used by the young Marx leave one in no doubt about the Judeo-Christian origins of the myth of the class elected through suffering for the redemption of humanity. The mission of the proletariat, the end of prehistory thanks to the Revolution, the reign of liberty—it is easy to recognize the source of these ideas: the Messiah, the break with the past, the Kingdom of God. Such comparisons are by no means damaging to Marxism. The resurrection, in seemingly scientific form, of age-old beliefs has a natural appeal for minds weaned on faith.

Aron gave a further explanation of why the French intellectuals were so receptive to revolutionary Marxism: they, more than any other class, suffered from the shrinking of France's stature and power in the world. In compensation, as spokesmen for a nation which had, for most of the last two centuries, been the principal disseminator of the ideas of the European Left, they sought to reassert their preeminence by expounding theories applicable to all humanity and all history.

The charge that Aron leveled at the French Marxist intellectuals was a grave one: that their indulgent stance toward Soviet policies and toward the ambitions of the French Communist party was a betrayal of the most vital traditions of their own

civilization. For while the Communists (in France) always took care to present their doctrine as the natural heir to the spirit of the Enlightenment, in practice they had hardened the Marxist prophecy into dogma and made the banishment of skepticism a defining political value. (The French poet Paul Eluard praised Stalinist Czechoslovakia in 1952 for "shutting its doors to doubt.") To submit to this, Aron argued, was to desert the one tradition that was the foundation of all Western achievements:

The essence of Western culture, the basis of its success, the secret of its wide influence, is liberty. Not universal suffrage, a belated and debatable political institution; not the parliamentary system, which is one democratic procedure among others, but the freedom of research and criticism, gradually won, the freedom whose historical conditions have been the duality of temporal and spiritual power, the limitations of state authority and the autonomy of the universities.

At the close of *The Opium of the Intellectuals*, Aron remarked on "the first glimmerings of skepticism" that were appearing on the horizons of French intellectual life—omens, he happily suggested, that might presage "the end of the ideological age." For despite the passion of his polemic, Aron did not consider it likely that Communism would come to power in Western Europe on its ideological merits; the problem it posed essentially concerned foreign policy. Only the Bolshevik seizure of power had given credibility to the claims of Leninism and encouraged their diffusion. "Unarmed prophets," Aron concluded, "inevitably perish; the future of the secular religion depends on the balance of power."

NOT surprisingly, then, Aron in the early 1950's, almost alone among French intellectuals, was unequivocal in his advocacy of French integration into the Atlantic alliance. Indeed, his critique of French Marxism was in part intended to clarify France's diplomatic choices by dispelling the ideological haze that habitually surrounded their discussion. As he pointed out, if it had been czarist Russia that had moved twenty-five divisions to within two hundred kilometers of the Rhine, and installed, in Warsaw and East Berlin, potentates who swore their allegiance to the eternal Holy Russian Empire, no progressive French intellectual would deny the logic of the Western nations' uniting their forces to restore a military equilibrium at the line of demarcation.

Yet while Aron emphatically affirmed that a common Western defense effort, including American troops, was needed to reduce to a minimum any Soviet temptation to push farther westward, throughout most of the 1950's he stressed the limitations of what the Western nations could achieve by the use of military force. He considered it unreasonable for France to commit resources to hold its colonial empire together when it lacked the means to defend its own territory. After World

War II, he opposed the French effort to reestablish control over Vietnam, although that implied acceptance of Ho Chi Minh's domination of the Vietnamese nationalist movement. (In his memoirs he regretted not having criticized France's Vietnam policy with more frequency and force.)

In *The Algerian Tragedy*, published in 1957, Aron was an early advocate of Algerian independence. The pamphlet outraged most of the French Right; but left-wing intellectuals were for their part dismayed by its lack of moral indignation over French conduct of the war. Aron did ignore the highly charged emotional reference points of the French debate on the Algerian issue, and he made no ideological condemnation of colonialism. Instead, he argued that it would be impossible to govern Algeria's Muslim population—whose birth rates were higher and whose living standards lower than those of the metropolitan French—under French law; further integration of the two communities (as proposed by most of the advocates of *Algérie française*) was therefore quite implausible. Closer ties to Algeria would obligate the French to raise the territory's living standards nearer to their own; but not even the oil underneath the Sahara would render this possible without the sacrifice of France's own economic growth. This manner of formulating his conclusions earned Aron the epithets of an "icy" and "calculating" thinker, callous toward the fate of the French settlers in Algeria, indifferent to France's destiny, a "defeatist" and a "pessimist."

Aron's caution was due primarily to his sense of the limits of France's resources. But on a more general level, he was genuinely uncertain about whether Western institutions and political practices could take root outside the developed nations. Convinced that both freedom of inquiry and the respect of the government for the wishes of the governed were ideals of universal validity, Aron nevertheless wondered whether such concrete institutions as parties, elections, and parliaments were the necessary means to their realization in the Third World. In *The Opium of the Intellectuals* he had advised that Westerners would be mistaken to attribute "universal significance" to such institutions. Five years later he questioned whether it was a form of racism *not* to advocate the only institutions that had permitted the general realization of liberal ideals once the traditionalist structures of society had been broken down by the forces of modernization.

IN 1962 Aron published *Peace and War*, a tremendously ambitious effort to "understand the implicit logic" of international relations. It is a work whose scope and comprehensiveness remain unchallenged to this day. The book opened up international relations as a subject for university study in France, and had an impressive impact on the field in universities throughout the world. Aron later regretted that in the final chapters he strayed too far from theory,

and immersed himself too deeply in contemporary dilemmas. But it is these final sections, written during a sabbatical year at Harvard, that are the most gripping. And though Aron would never have acknowledged it, the reader cannot but feel that the closing section, "Praxology"—a plea for a diplomacy that combines both a sense of *mesure* and *Realpolitik*—was written for the education of a young American republic that could not avoid mature responsibilities.

Aron viewed the international system as amoral: states do not subscribe (in practice) to a common legal code, and do not renounce the taking of the law into their own hands; their survival depends not on legal judgments but on the balance of power. He stressed his sympathy with George F. Kennan's critique of the legalistic and moralistic temper of the American study of international relations, and he expressed a withering impatience with what he called the "idealistic illusion" that underlay much of American diplomatic behavior, particularly during the interwar period. (About the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact outlawing war, he commented that "anyone imagining he was guaranteeing peace by outlawing war was like a doctor imagining he was curing disease by declaring it contrary to the aspirations of humanity.")

Ethical considerations were incorporated into Aron's perspective, but these, he maintained, ultimately depended upon the historical judgment of the success or failure of an external action. As Aron explained (in a subsequent essay on American foreign policy), the historical view was "inseparable from a judgment about the internal system, that is, whether the armies bring with them freedom or tyranny, economic development or stagnation, a modernizing or reactionary elite." Yet he noted that even that level of interpretation did not resolve the ethical complexity: if France had heeded the advice of Marshal Pilsudski and overthrown Hitler by force in 1933, historians would never have known what miseries humanity would have been spared.

Aron's argument was that the statesman has the moral duty to recognize international relations for what they are, to calculate first of all the balance of forces, and to understand the selfishness of his own nation and that of others. This attitude he called the "morality of prudence"—and the policies he derived from it were prudent indeed, at least by comparison with those undertaken by most American statesmen during the next two decades.

ARON's recommendations, set out in the chapter "To Survive Is To Conquer," were organized around the idea that the purpose of Western strategy was both the preservation of its institutions and the avoidance of war with the Soviet Union.

At the outset he conceded that the most likely means of avoiding nuclear war were capitulation and unilateral disarmament. But even that course

would not insure survival; disarmament would guarantee nothing at all except helplessness, for throughout human history the extermination of the disarmed had been one of the possible expressions of victory. Furthermore, Aron maintained that the moral stakes in the cold war were such that the risks of resisting Communism were worth running, and he opened his discussion of strategy with a consideration of what those stakes were.

The Soviet Union, Aron pointed out, justified its system of dictatorial rule with the claim that only the Communist party was capable of overcoming monopoly capitalism and opening the way to a classless society. But this justification rested on a philosophy of history that was manifestly false. The progression from a capitalism defined by private ownership to a socialism characterized by economic planning and the monopoly power of the Communist party had brought about neither the end of the alienation of man from his labor nor the abolition of social and economic inequities; it was plain enough that the party was not the proletariat. Because, Aron said,

their philosophy does not agree with the facts, the Soviets have been forced gradually to construct an extraordinary system of lies, and to oblige conquered or converted peoples to live in a perpetual lie. . . . Because they have done something different from what they believed they would do, because they pursued inaccessible goals, goals contrary to the nature of men and societies, the Communists lie as perhaps no great historical movement before them has ever lied. The rejection of Communism is for me above all the rejection of the enforced lie.

In invoking such fundamental values to justify resistance to Communism, Aron was making no claim about the relative perfection of Western societies. The decisive difference was that criticism of Western society was itself an integral part of society. "One may," Aron wrote,

debate the share of power in the hands of the monopolies (or large corporations). But it would never occur to an American theorist to claim that the more power such monopolies have, the more completely democracy is realized. On the Soviet side, such an inversion of values is the foundation of the regime, since the party is identified with class, and the rule of the party with the realization of liberty.

The strategic problem remained: how were Western societies to be defended without increasing the risk of war? For the Communists were not only despotic toward the populations they governed; their ideology implied that conflict with capitalist societies was inevitable, even beneficial—the diplomatic expression of the historically pre-ordained transition from capitalism to socialism. Thus, according to the Marxist-Leninist conception, any period of détente could be nothing more than a pause in the protracted conflict. The Soviets, Aron wrote, "cannot even conceive of what a peace without a victory might be."

Did the Communist conception of the world impose upon Western governments the requirement to respond in kind, by adopting a military-diplomatic strategy that had, as its goal, the political (or physical) destruction of the Soviet regime? Would the failure to adopt such a "forward strategy" doom the West to passivity, and increase the likelihood of its eventual defeat? Aron recognized this as a crucial question, and he acknowledged that a Western posture based on peaceful coexistence, which did not counter Soviet attempts at subversion with subversive efforts of its own, increased the danger that the West would perish by gradual suffocation. But he countered that the bourgeois democracies, even when they appeared diplomatically passive, were, by the mere fact of their existence, aggressive toward the Soviet empire, because of the standards of living and the liberties that they reserved for their citizens.

The strategy that Aron proposed was both limited and defensive: the West should not seek to overcome the Soviet regime but should simply pursue what he defined as "survival and peace." By survival, he meant not only the avoidance of war, but also moral survival—the maintaining of liberal civilization. Peace he defined as the "reciprocal acceptance by each bloc of the other's existence and right to existence."

He acknowledged that phrasing Western purposes in this limited manner was "contrary to the passions of the struggle." Still, *not* matching the universalist pretensions of the Soviets' ideology with equally ambitious aims offered the best chance of peace-making without war and "the total collapse of one of the contenders." For "the conversion of the Marxist-Leninists to a more modest and truthful self-interpretation" would be for the West a striking victory—"of all victories the most fruitful, since it would have been obtained without bloodshed and would pave the way to reconciliation."

Aron recognized that such a victory implied a radical change in the way the Soviets viewed the world. It would not be attained without the Soviets' recognition that their government was nothing more than one form of modern government among others; they would have to cease to consider themselves engaged in the universal diffusion of what they called socialism. Aron saw nothing in Soviet practice that suggested the imminence of such a conversion, and he thus foresaw the need for a protracted Western effort. But once Western goals were defined in this defensive fashion, it would become easier to discriminate effectively between those interests vital to Western survival and those of secondary importance.

About such discrimination Aron made two main points. The first was that maintaining the central military balance between the blocs, at both nuclear and non-nuclear levels, was the vital requirement of a defensive strategy. He argued that if the Soviets achieved any meaningful superiority in arma-

ments on either the Central European front or in strategic nuclear weapons, they would be tempted to press their advantage by making demands on the West to choose between capitulation and war. It was, he wrote, precisely because a balance of forces had been created in Europe that the East-West conflict had not assumed a military dimension; as soon as that balance of forces was compromised, peace in Europe would be thrown into jeopardy.

Aron's second point was that Western Europe was the vital strategic stake in the cold war; so long as Atlantic unity was preserved, any positions in the Third World which had been lost could be, eventually, regained or compensated for. If Atlantic unity were shaken, however, all of the West's other positions would be endangered.

In 1962 this emphasis on the primacy of Europe was contrary to the prevailing concerns of most American strategists, who were paying increased attention to the problems posed by Communist insurgency movements in the Third World. Aron did not suggest that Western statesmen could ignore political and military developments in Asia and Africa, and he advocated both increased developmental assistance and aid in armaments and in "counter-subversion" techniques to friendly regimes that faced Communist guerrilla movements. But he did urge Western statesmen to recognize that no defeats in the Third World would have a decisive impact on the central balance of forces between the two camps. The advent of nuclear weapons had diminished the value of allies; the passage of one or several Third World states from one camp to another would have only a marginal effect on the resources available to either bloc. He argued that the ideological allegiances of Third World governments were likely to be transient and revocable, and he thought that few Third World revolutionary regimes would be inclined to cut their ties definitively to the West. He counseled "detachment and a certain indifference" each time "Ruritania" declared its allegiance to Moscow, and advised Western statesmen to recognize that the Third World would be undergoing revolutionary transformation even if Marxism-Leninism had never existed.

Over twenty years have passed since the publication of these chapters on Western strategy, and what is striking is the disparity between what Aron considered the appropriate measures for the conduct of Western strategy and the policies pursued by the United States. For the two central operational concepts that made up Aron's strategic suggestion—a certain sense of *mesure* toward indigenous Communist insurgencies in the Third World and a deep seriousness about maintaining the Soviet-American military balance at all levels—are precisely those that were violated, in turn, by American statesmen: the first, during the 1960's, to the most extreme degree imaginable, and the second, during the 1970's, to an extent that has yet to be determined.

ARON's study of American foreign policy during the postwar era, *The Imperial Republic*, appeared in 1972. In the American edition, published during the final months of the Watergate scandal, Aron expressed his own appreciation of the diplomacy of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger, and regarded with foreboding the erosion of the preeminence of the executive branch in the conduct of American foreign policy. The study, sympathetic in its broad contours toward both Americans and their political culture, and enthusiastic about what American postwar policies had achieved in Western Europe, was nonetheless peppered with exasperation at the way in which the United States had conducted much of its foreign policy. The Vietnam war was the principal error: Aron described it as a historical watershed, marking the division between America's rise in global influence and prestige and the onset of its relative decline.

Aron supported the objectives of the American war effort; the maintenance of a non-Communist regime in the South was fully consistent with the postwar logic of divided nations, and a more legitimate goal than the French effort to keep a colonial position in Vietnam during the 1950's. But what he ruefully found absent from American policy was the sense of proportion and discrimination that would have enabled the government to determine whether a non-Communist South Vietnam was truly a stake so vital as to require the commitment of half-a-million men.

Extending the doctrine of containment outside Europe was not, Aron thought, in itself illogical. But he regretted the tendency of American policymakers to "substitute symbol for reality in the discrimination of interests." They had construed containment as a categorical imperative, and the coming to power of any Communist party anywhere as a defeat. The consequence of this corrupted sense of strategy was that the United States had pursued quite modest goals in Vietnam "with the kind of obstinacy . . . in which even success could never compensate for the human cost, first in Vietnam, and then to the United States itself."

At the end of *The Imperial Republic*, Aron forecast a period of relative American indifference toward the outside world, and he worried whether the nation whose foreign policy had historically oscillated between crusading idealism and isolationism would be able to pursue a middle course. Many of the American critics of the Vietnam war, he thought, seemed intent on turning noninterventionism into their own categorical imperative, seemingly unaware that both their nation's ties to the international economy and their own national psychology made an involvement in the world unavoidable.

A much more pessimistic tone came into Aron's writings during the late 1970's. In books like *In Defense of Decadent Europe* (1977) and in such essays as "Soviet Hegemony: Year One" (1980), Aron expressed greater concern about the East-

West balance of power, and less confidence in the survival of free institutions in Western Europe than at any time since the early 1950's.

His pessimism flowed from his analysis of the international situation, which had undergone important shifts during the 1970's. The Soviet projection of military power into Africa and Central Asia, the Cuban interventions in Angola, Ethiopia, and Yemen—all of this, Aron conceded, was not the first time a great power had pursued an imperial ambition by projecting military force beyond its borders. What alarmed him was Western indifference toward these advances. Though he had asserted, in both *Peace and War* and *The Imperial Republic*, that no particular Third World state was in itself a vital stake in the East-West competition, such states were important in the aggregate. One could, Aron wrote, argue easily enough that a Soviet base in Ethiopia did not upset the global balance, but it was an argument that grew weaker each time it was repeated. The West could not be indifferent if one African country after another were dragged into the Soviet orbit; it would be absurd to pretend that Soviet domination of the sea lanes connecting the Persian Gulf to Western Europe would not fundamentally alter the global balance of power.

The lack of a Western strategy to curb Soviet advances greatly disturbed him. In "Soviet Hegemony: Year One" he ascribed global significance to recent changes in the American political climate: the Eastern establishment, collectively the creator of the containment doctrine, had torn itself apart over Vietnam, leaving the United States with no foreign-policy consensus and no ruling elite capable of formulating one. Aron wrote that the contrast between the aspirations expressed in John F. Kennedy's inaugural address and Edward M. Kennedy's habitual campaign against the American military budget was a portentous symbol of American decline; an equally significant sign, this time of the changed attitudes of American foreign-policy intellectuals, was George Kennan's conversion to a stance of near isolationism.

Aron was the same age as Kennan, and had known and respected him for decades. He considered Kennan's finest hour to be the advice he had given to the American government (summarized in Kennan's famous Mr. X article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1947, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct") that repeated demonstrations of American good will would neither impress Stalin nor stem Soviet expansion. Kennan's repudiation of the policy of which he had been a principal architect troubled Aron, and in an essay ("Mr. X Renders an Account with His Past," 1978) and in several passages in his memoirs Aron sought to understand Kennan's conversion and to define his own disagreement.

For both men the central question remained what it had been in 1947: what were the ambitions of Soviet foreign policy, and in what manner did they flow from the nature of the Soviet regime?

To Aron it seemed that Kennan, in his most recent writings, had resorted to caricature in describing the attitudes of those worried about Soviet military expansion. It was plain enough, Aron argued, that the Soviet leaders were not plotting to unleash a surprise military attack on the West on a day which they had set in advance. But it did not follow that the regime had thereby transformed itself into a group of prudent elderly men, defensive in their strategic concerns, whose main worry was agricultural productivity.

Thirty years ago Kennan had argued that Stalin had no inclination toward military risk-taking; his regime was sensitive, above all, to the balance of forces, military and political, that were arrayed against its expansion. What Kennan had not done, Aron contended, was to demonstrate that the "sources of Soviet conduct" had changed, in their essentials, since Stalin's time. Certainly the dictatorship had grown more supple—dissidents were incarcerated or exiled rather than killed, and the political competition in the Kremlin was no longer a life-and-death struggle. But these changes did not imply the transformation of Soviet foreign-policy goals. The regime still spoke to its own militants about the inevitable triumph of Communism over capitalism, and the large percentage of its national product devoted to armaments indicated that it did not share the commonly expressed American opinion about the diminishing relevance of military force as an instrument of foreign policy.

What Aron found absent from Kennan's analysis was any effort to attribute political meaning to the changes in the balance of military power. The Soviets had recently attained equality with the United States, and perhaps superiority, in strategic nuclear weapons; they had, at the same time, developed the capacity to project their military power globally. For the first time they had begun to use military force outside the zones occupied by their army in 1945. To Aron it seemed that Kennan had chosen an unusual moment to announce that the analysis he had made of Soviet foreign policy in 1946-47 was no longer valid. How, Aron wondered, was it possible to argue that at the very moment when both Soviet military capacities and activities had increased, Soviet goals had become less ambitious?

Aron described the threats to the liberty of Western Europe as diffuse, shifting, and complex. No longer attracted by Communist ideology, West Europeans lived under the growing shadow of the Soviet army. Aron did not think the Soviets would attack; such risk-taking was no more characteristic of Brezhnev's regime than of Stalin's. But the Soviets sought to profit from their ability to intimidate the nations of Western Europe, to acclimate them to the idea that there was a plausible Soviet military option, to convince the Europeans that they owed their security not to their own defense, or to their alliance with the United States, but to Soviet prudence and good faith.

At another level the threat involved Europe's

dependence on resources from the Third World, particularly oil from the Persian Gulf. Here Aron argued that the overall military balance between the two blocs, and the readiness of each side to fight, if need be, to defend its vital interests, had a great influence on future developments in the region. In "Soviet Hegemony: Year One," Aron argued that the balance of forces was never absent from the minds of diplomats, or from the consciousness of both rulers and rebels. The contrast between the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and America's passivity during the collapse of the Shah of Iran could not fail to make an impression on the Islamic world: Arabian princes now feared, rather than sought, American protection; even anti-Communist potentates took care to direct the fury of their street mobs away from Soviet embassies. This mattered: the regimes and the resources at stake were not of quasi-symbolic interest to the West—as Vietnam had been for the United States and Algeria for France. Europe could not survive without oil from the Middle East—yet it had developed no policy to insure its access. The willingness to face up to the dangers and adopt the necessary policies depended, ultimately, on a European sense of civic morality and collective resolution, which Aron felt was very nearly absent.

Over the last generation, Aron pointed out, West Europeans had made dazzling progress. Their economies had flourished, their politics had remained tolerant and liberal, their people had been creative in all fields. If the judgments of history were rendered by a court predisposed to the virtuous, the Europeans would have little to fear. But Aron had no great confidence that history would be so indulgent; it had habitually favored those societies that produced citizens willing to make sacrifices necessary to the survival of the community.

THE community whose preservation was the purpose of so much of Aron's writing was first of all French, and in important respects European and Western. Jewish by ancestry, Aron did not define himself by his attachment to Jewish traditions or communities. In his own description he was a "*juif déjudaïsé*," a "dejudaized Jew," who felt "the same emotion in front of the Wailing Wall as in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre." Aron stressed his affiliation with the religion of his forefathers only when Jews came under attack.

Hitler's rise to power, which Aron experienced as a young teacher in Cologne and Berlin, first made him aware of his Jewishness. Surprisingly, perhaps, this consciousness restrained his writing during the 1930's: was his reaction to the German menace, he wondered, that of a Jew or of a Frenchman? He expressed remorse about this in later writings, and welcomed the fact that being a Jew made it easier for him to advocate French reconciliation with Germany after World War II.

Aron felt no great enthusiasm for the birth of

Israel, and he seemed to have been surprised at the growth of his own affection for the Jewish state. He visited Israel for the first time in 1956, and was struck, most of all, by the resurrection, in modern times, of a "nearly forgotten kind of polity—a republic of citizen-soldiers."

What Aron wrote about Judaism and about Israel and the Arabs is but a small fragment of his collected works. But these essays, collected in the volume *De Gaulle, Israel, and the Jews* (1968), contain some of his most passionate and revealing writing. His reaction to de Gaulle's caricature of Jews as "an elite people, self-assured and domineering" was severe. In that language Aron recognized a vocabulary of anti-Semitism that had been repressed in France since the fall of the Vichy government. Aron's reply was a *tour de force* of irony, indignation, and uncharacteristic confession. The confession concerned his own attachment to Israel, whose survival he had feared for during the days that preceded the 1967 war. "I have never been a Zionist," Aron wrote,

firstly and above all because I do not feel myself to be a Jew. It seemed to me probable that the state of Israel, simply because it existed, would lead to a prolonged conflict. I cannot agree now any more than in the past to uphold *unconditionally* the policy of a handful of men, no better and no worse than those who govern anywhere else in the world, responsible for the Israeli state. But I also know, more clearly than in the past, that in the event of the state of Israel being destroyed (an event that would be accompanied by the massacre of part of the population), I should be wounded in the very depths of my being.

This solidarity with Israel did not inhibit Aron from expressing reservations about Israeli policies, and his practice of writing about events in the Middle East from a consciously *French* perspective (the emphasis was Aron's) brought him many troubled and irritated letters from other French Jews.

BRIEFLY in his youth Raymond Aron belonged to the French Socialist party; for two years after the war he wrote position papers and made speeches for the Gaullists. With the exception of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who overlooked some of the acid comments he made about his foreign policy, Aron managed to be on reasonably bad terms with every French president in the postwar era. "He never was a Gaullist" was de Gaulle's remark about the man who had followed him to London in June 1940 and edited the principal Free French newspaper. Georges Pompidou said something similar: "You can never count on Raymond Aron." That comment was made shortly after Aron had been received, at his own request,

for a political discussion in the presidential palace—and had then gone on to write critically of Pompidou's policy. What Aron felt he owed to political leaders was not loyalty but his own independent judgment. Naturally Aron cited both of the above remarks with mischievous approval.

Aron's readers, in France and throughout the world, could always count on him. One always knew his values and preferences, but it is difficult to convey the sublime sense of authority, and—so far as it is possible in any political writing—objectivity that rang through every piece he wrote.

Yet even those who admired Aron, and shared, more or less, his political perspectives, regretted his pessimism. Well before he began to voice his alarm at the deterioration of the global balance of power, Aron was criticized for restraining political enthusiasms. One such critic, the American liberal Henry Aiken, complained, in 1964,* that "the vein of pessimism and the self-division" running through Aron's works left no space for the governing ideas that were needed for the "reconstruction of society in the 20th century."

Aron's reply, not a denial but an explanation, comes as near as any single passage to expressing how he formed his values in response to the experience of his century. "I do not know to what generation Aiken belongs," he wrote,

but any man living in the same century as Hitler and Stalin who does not experience from time to time doubts about the temporal destiny of humanity, must be supported by what, on the kindest possible view, is a very naive and simple faith. Millions of Jews were exterminated in the name of racism, millions of kulaks were deported for the purpose of agrarian collectivization, millions of innocent people were thrown into prison by a despot who was acclaimed by tens of thousands of intellectuals the world over, and if all these deaths and absurdities have not shaken my system of values, they have at least put me on guard forever against people who talk of "reconstructing society" (those strange builders who always begin by destroying) and have roused me from the dogmatic slumber induced by philosophies of history. I do not know what the future of humanity will be, but I do know that we do not know. Those who claim to know are deliberately falsifying the truth. We are entitled to hope for a future in keeping with human aspirations, but not to present our hope as a certainty, and still less to expect confidently that the laws of history or the action of one particular party (or class) will bring it about.

America had no better European friend, and liberty no wiser defender, than this great man. His death has made life more lonely for free peoples everywhere.

* "The Revolt Against Ideology," COMMENTARY, April 1964.

East Europeanists Need Not Apply

Mark Pinson

FOR some time now, we have been hearing about a crisis in the field of Soviet and East European studies in the U.S. A number of statements have appeared, in a variety of formats, lamenting the shortage of specialists in the field. One prominent recent example, an editorial published in the *New York Times* on November 8, 1982, asserted that "1,600 highly trained Soviet and East Europe experts are needed in public and private-sector jobs, not including high-school jobs, while only 1,074 are available."

From this, one would naturally conclude that there were 526 jobs open in the field. Yet speaking as one who has followed the job market for East Europe specialists very closely over the last several years, I am convinced that had the authors of this editorial been put to the test, they could not have come up with 20 specific openings (excluding language positions), let alone 526.

In what follows, I shall simply describe a few of my own experiences over the last five to six years trying to find a job that would make use of my qualifications as a specialist in East European studies. (Throughout, I use "East European" rather than "Soviet" to emphasize the longstanding neglect of this field, about which even some specialists on the USSR are now concerned.) Briefly, those qualifications consist of a Ph.D. from Harvard in East European and Middle Eastern history, about ten years'

residence in these two areas, and the study of about a dozen foreign languages, including most of the major languages of both areas. In describing my own experiences, I should stress that there is nothing unique about them, except perhaps their number. Many of my colleagues have had similar experiences, although the younger ones—with fewer years invested—have already left the field, or plan to do so soon.

A major concern of those who write about the "national need" for East European specialists is, quite naturally, that there should be a sufficiency (or, in the new buzz word, a "critical mass") of experts in order, among other things, to supply people for government agencies. Yet a question the authors of such articles do not discuss is the degree to which government agencies themselves, and their personnel offices, share this concern.

One year, despite longstanding misgivings, I decided to take the Foreign Service exam. I passed the written part, but did not pass the oral part, which consisted of an interview with three Foreign Service officers. The first half of the interview was spent discussing such things as my training, my background, and my reasons for wanting to join the Foreign Service. Most of the second half was spent discussing how I would deal with two hypothetical problems: (a) a distraught father of an American girl jailed by local authorities on drug charges, who asks to be lent a large amount of cash so that a local lawyer can get the girl released through bribery; (b) dividing equitably the use of a U.S. embassy swimming pool, first between the U.S. nationals and

locals employed by the embassy, and second between these two groups and the nationals of friendly embassies.

While the Foreign Service and I take different views of my performance in the exam, one thing is indisputable: at no point in either the written or the oral test did the examiners make any attempt to assess my area expertise or linguistic competence in the two regions in which I had been trained. The Foreign Service would undoubtedly counter that it is not interested in specialists, only in good "generalists." The fact remains, however, that most of the countries with which we have relations are small or medium-sized and each has its own set of complicated realities. To understand correctly and cope with these realities, a specialist is often needed.

For example, the languages of many countries—such as Greece—are quite unlike the Spanish or French that are most widely studied in the U.S. For a real knowledge of these languages, which is required if one is to understand them adequately, the Berlitz blitz provided by the Foreign Service Institute can serve only as a starting point; it cannot confer fluency. Nor does the standard rotation policy of the Foreign Service—this year Hungary, next year Peru—help matters any. It offers no incentive for learning the language of a country which is not either a superpower or even a member of a larger bloc of countries speaking the same language—such as Arabic.

This whole issue was epitomized for me by the plight of an American cultural attaché at one of our embassies trying to converse with a group of local secretaries in their own language. When they asked him what the subject of his current research was, it turned out he did not know the word for it; the subject was literacy. That particular attaché struck me as an intelligent, conscientious person who was do-

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ing his best; the failings were not his own, but those of the system.

MOST of the nine or ten years I have lived abroad have been in small or medium-sized states possessing rather specialized characteristics. The first year I spent in Istanbul, for example, afforded some painful contrasts between the American "generalists" stationed there and the Soviet personnel I met, who had much more specialized training and longer experience of the country. Why the Foreign Service, over all these years, has not been able to find its way to a two-track system—specialists and non-specialists—has always baffled me.

Had there been an area specialist stationed at the U.S. embassy in Kabul in September 1980, for example—one who had completed a Central Asia area program, a mandatory part of which would have been the study of Russian—we might have been spared the unfortunate situation when a Russian soldier tried to defect but could not make himself understood because there was no one in our embassy who spoke Russian (nine months after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan). The would-be defector reportedly also spoke some German, but none of the generalists at the embassy knew that language either. When the U.S. then tried to send in a Russian-speaker, the local authorities created difficulties.

The Foreign Service might have been better prepared for this situation if more of its staff had read a book on the list of readings recommended to applicants for the Foreign Service exam. This book, *Overtime in Heaven*, narrating dramatic episodes from the lives of officers throughout the history of the Service, contains a chapter describing the adventures of a young man sent out to be consul in Tabriz in 1946, just after the Soviets invaded northern Iran. The man's only previous foreign posting had been in Panama; the account makes no mention of his having received any area training; and he knew neither Farsi, Russian, nor Azeri. The new American consul did a good job of improvising under the circumstances, although Washing-

ton did finally wake up and send in a Russian-speaker. The story is clearly intended to point up the consul's grit and resourcefulness. The reader, however, may be struck more by the fact that the Foreign Service sent someone so totally unprepared into such a complex and dangerous situation.

In this connection, a letter from a retired Foreign Service officer published by the *Times* in response to its November 1982 editorial pointed out, strikingly, that none of his colleagues who had served in the USSR, who knew Russian, and who were seeking employment in the Russian field had been able to find any.

ANOTHER branch of the State Department in which a young East Europeanist might think to seek employment is the Intelligence and External Research division. Research units on the USSR and Eastern Europe in this division number about five persons apiece, but a formula stipulates that the units be made up of half Foreign Service and half civil-service personnel, which does not create a large demand for non-Foreign Service specialists. Nor is this an isolated instance of such small numbers. At a recent convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS), one panel consisted of representatives of various government agencies who had come to encourage younger specialists to seek employment in government. About thirty people showed up for this panel. At one point in the discussion, the representative of the United States Information Agency (USIA) was asked specifically how many people his agency was ready to hire at the time. His answer was—one, a Poland specialist. To the best of my recollection, none of the other panel members came up with any figures at all—just the usual generalities about the need for qualified people.

My own more recent experience with the USIA bears this out. A little over a year ago, I contacted the agency directly to ask about employment and was told not to apply, since they had only one research unit covering all of Eastern

Europe, with four people working full time on the USSR and a fifth dividing his time between the USSR and all the other nations of Eastern Europe.

The intelligence community of course makes no personnel figures available, and I would not hazard a guess as to how many East European specialists it has, or is hiring, these days. I have, however, had some strange experiences with hiring procedures. At the 1982 AAASS convention a group of recruiters from an army intelligence unit expressed some interest in my background. When I offered one of them a copy of my résumé to take back to his home office, he said it would be better if I mailed it in directly. If he brought the résumé in himself, it would be assumed that I was a friend or relative whose career he was trying to advance.

Another noteworthy aspect of my contacts with these agencies and especially their personnel offices is their standard reaction to the years I have spent in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Although one might think they would be pleased to find someone who has actually spent time in these areas, in fact they are not, for that makes it more difficult to obtain a security clearance. This reaction is especially curious in light of the fact that the majority of the other applicants I have met are young—in their twenties—and have traveled abroad relatively little. Once they enter the service, they come under travel restrictions, and so most may never get the chance to know first-hand the area which is the focus of their work. With actual *in situ* experience less than abundant, one wonders why it should be devalued in this way. The fledgling East Europeanist will find little consolation in the fact that foreign experience is also largely discounted in academia, although for different reasons.

A THIRD area of possible employment for the East Europeanist might seem to be the two radio stations—Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe—broadcasting respectively to the USSR and to Eastern Europe. Shortly after the Soviet in-

vasion of Afghanistan, two brief articles in the *Times* hinted at a possible increase in Radio Liberty broadcasts to Soviet Central Asia, and the advent of the Reagan administration further fueled such speculation. Not too long after the *Times* stories, indeed, Radio Liberty announced a fellowship program to encourage Central Asian and Turkic studies; soon IREX, an organization which handles most of the academic exchanges between the U.S. and Eastern Europe, announced a new fellowship program with this as one of its goals. Yet at the AAASS convention held in October 1982 a senior official of Radio Liberty told a roomful of people who had come to hear about job openings that the stations could not fill any of their vacant slots—either the Central Asian one or any others—owing to lack of funds. (If, moreover, there is a real dearth of Turkic/Central Asian specialists, where were the job notices and interviews at the large conference on Turkic studies at Indiana University last May?)

At the most recent AAASS convention, held this past October in Kansas City, there were no notices up about Central Asia at all. Instead, a man from Radio Free Europe was looking for a specialist on the economies of Eastern Europe—and apparently having a hard time finding one. This may well have been the first time he had had any contact with the job market in this area, and he may have concluded there is a shortage of specialists. A more accurate picture of the market, however, is given by the experience of a recent arrival from the Soviet Union who knows five or six East European languages, obtained his graduate degree in economics, and worked for some years at the Soviet institute for the study of Communist economies. This man looked for a job in his field for three years and, finding none, retrained as a computer specialist, which is how he now supports his family. Here we see the case of someone uniquely qualified for the job Radio Free Europe was trying to fill but who could not find employment. *He* had the necessary

training and experience; American graduate students in economics who begin watching the job notices early in their careers know what the prospects in this area are, and so never invest in it to a comparable degree. Where, then, is the shortage?

At the same convention the Rand Corporation posted a press release in which the president of Rand, citing the “well-known shortage” of experts on Soviet foreign policy, announced the creation of a new program to train specialists. This announcement appeared on the same bulletin board with the job notices, of which there were seven for the *entire* U.S.; of these several were for language positions, none for Soviet foreign-policy experts, and one for a British university. Since there were also recruiters from Voice of America, the CIA, and an army intelligence unit, there may have been 15 jobs open at this national convention attended by at least 500 specialists on East Europe.

It may be contended that government offices do not really need East European experts on their regular payroll since there must be some sort of data bank somewhere with the names of people who could be contacted quickly if the need arose. My own experience of the Washington bureaucracy, however, leads me to doubt that any such orderly arrangement exists. At one point, for example, I applied for a research position at a government agency and was told the position had just been filled. Since the agency in question frequently needs people with area expertise, I offered to send in my résumé for their file in the event of some future opening. The immediate answer was that this would be pointless since they already had a drawerful of résumés, and checking even the old ones each time a position opened up was proving far too unwieldy.

ANOTHER experience with a bureaucracy strengthens my doubts. A few years ago one branch of our armed forces ran a series of ads for its reserve programs listing openings for persons with some thirty

different skills, including that of “translator” for five languages, of which I know two well (Russian and Hebrew) and have the rudiments of a third (Arabic). I called the number given in the ad several times, getting either a busy signal or an answering machine. Each time I got the machine I gave my name, phone number, and other relevant data. My calls not having been returned, I eventually went in person to a large Boston office of this branch of the military, where no one on the staff that I met knew anything about the program or could refer me to anyone who might. From a circular received by a colleague I then got the number of two bases in the Boston area involved in the same program. When I called the first, I got yet another answering machine. At the second, I got a live officer to whom I explained my interest and my qualifications very precisely.

The officer assured me that he would send out the relevant material right away; a few days later I did indeed receive a large, slick brochure. It dealt only with the air arm of that particular branch of the military, with not a word about the reserve program that included translation jobs. I then wrote a letter to the national headquarters of the reserve program explaining my interest and qualifications again. In the nearly two years since then, I have still not received an answer from them. I did, however, get a call a few months ago from the successor to my live officer. He explained that in the course of cleaning out his predecessor's desk he had found a reference to sending me material but no response from me. It is difficult to reconcile this experience with the picture of government offices anxious over a shortage of linguists in “critical” languages.

If this was an instance where I could not even get my name into a file, success on that front (with another part of government) has also proved no guarantee of progress toward a job. Some years ago, when I first applied for a position in Washington, I was told to file for “eligibility” with the Civil Ser-

vice Commission (CSC)—a procedure that required filling out Standard Form 171, as well as a variety of other forms asking more detailed questions about such things as education, special training, and so forth.

In the years following that first submission, I have filled out Standard Form 171 again and again, each time I have applied for a government position. Never once in the course of applying for these other jobs did I hear anything to indicate that a check had ever been made of the Civil Service Commission's file to see if any qualified persons were already listed there.

The data in the CSC file are collected to decide on appropriate rank and salary for would-be civil servants. If there were a great shortage of East European specialists, would it not be reasonable to expect that the file might also be used to locate such persons?

ABOUT five years ago, Fred M. Hechinger, then education editor of the *New York Times*, wrote an article describing a report that had been issued by the Office of Education. The report listed 25,000 jobs with the federal government and another 60,000 in the private sector, unfilled because of a lack of candidates with the requisite language skills. I wrote Hechinger for precise bibliographical details of the report. He replied that he had not actually seen it, only a mention of it in *Business & International Education*, a publication of the American Council on Education. I wrote to the Council; they too had apparently never seen the report. I tried to have the reference and interlibrary loan services of Harvard and the Library of Congress locate the report, but without precise data about it, they could not. Finally, I wrote to the Office of Education asking for bibliographical details. I received a letter informing me that the team which had compiled the report had been disbanded; there were no members of the team left at the Office of Education; the Office had no forwarding address for any of the members; and the Office had no copy of the report. The letter con-

cluded with the hope that the information contained therein had been of use.

Since I was a registered Pennsylvania voter (at the time), I talked to someone on Senator John Heinz's staff and within a few months his office had succeeded where all others had failed. It turned out, as nearly as I can reconstruct things, that a member of the Office of Education team had taken the report West and it was published commercially in one state for the education office of another. When, after further complications, I finally got to see the document, a couple of things became clear. First of all, there were no jobs listed in the report, even though it was several hundred pages long; the 85,000 jobs were listed in a data bank somewhere else. Second, the language skills mentioned by Hechinger in his article were desirable but not essential for getting any one of these jobs. For example, if a firm had a contract involving hydroponic agriculture in a Spanish-speaking country, it would look for someone in hydroponics who knew Spanish. Failing that, it would look for someone in hydroponics who was willing to learn Spanish. The reverse would not happen. Since my case fitted only the reverse pattern, I did not pursue the matter further. Again, however, one cannot but wonder if this suggests an economy and government eagerly seeking experts.

AT LAST October's AAASS convention I heard publicly stated, for the first time, the longstanding unofficial version of how one needs to go about finding a job. One of the panels featured a discussion of how graduate students in the East European field could best prepare for and locate a government job, taking into account the fact that some of these positions might require further qualifications such as a knowledge of economics or computer skills. A question came from the floor as to how one might learn about such openings far enough in advance to acquire the new skill(s). One of the panelists, an academic on leave with the government, replied that the way to ac-

complish this was to move to Washington and live there for a year or more, all the while checking continually with all possible agencies so as to learn about positions (and their requirements) well before they were officially posted as open. A woman from the Rand Corporation made much the same suggestion. In both these cases, needless to say, the matter of livelihood in the interim remained unspecified. I myself would readily agree that this is probably the only way for most East Europeanists to get a job in Washington. But the fact that this is true does not exactly argue for a great shortage of East European experts. Quite the reverse.

THE treatment accorded East European studies in the academic world is in general similar to its treatment in government, but for very different reasons. A good part of the expansion of area studies which took place in the universities between the late 50's and the late 60's was paid for with "soft" money—university parlance for outside funding on a short-term basis (as opposed to "hard" money, funds which are part of the regular budget). In 1969, however, the federal government began to move in the direction of cutting funding to area studies, and soon after, a number of foundations followed suit, though for reasons of their own. In the early 70's, the social-science departments of many universities also started to turn away from area studies, in favor of more general approaches. The shift meant, among other things, that these departments were not much inclined to fill the gaps left by the vanished "soft" money with their own "hard" money, which by then had also become scarcer and worth less. As a result, the number of graduate students specializing in Eastern Europe declined along with the number of teaching jobs in the field.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the "crisis" in East European studies is not a shortage of people studying that part of the world in the U.S. today; the "crisis" is a shortage of jobs. If it is in the national interest for more people to

be working on Eastern Europe, the real obstacle is not student indifference but budget cutting in the government and departmental opposition in the universities. If East

European studies were again to become a viable career, all the exhortations to which we have recently been subject would be unnecessary; if the job situation remains as it is,

no amount of exhortation or promotional grants will be effective. As one IREX alumnus put it, why train more people when there are already so many of us unemployed?

Politicizing Science

Jeffrey Marsh

IN AN age in which intellectual fashions seem to shift more frequently than the seasons, it is remarkable for a mass-circulation magazine to flourish continually, with virtually no change in its format or style, for over thirty-five years. The monthly *Scientific American* has done so, and in a conspicuously successful manner.

Scientific American was founded in 1845, but in its present form it came into existence in 1948, after Gerard Piel, Dennis Flanagan, and Donald H. Miller, Jr. bought the magazine from the Munn family, which had owned it since very early on. For a long time the magazine had focused on the industrial applications of science and technology; its highly detailed articles suggested a readership of grease-stained engineers and horny-handed hobbyists. In a manifesto published shortly after their purchase, the new publishers put forth their credo for a totally new format, targeted at "the growing community of U.S. citizens with a responsible interest in the advance and condition of science." The new *Scientific American* would provide professional scientists with technically respectable but not overly esoteric accounts of developments

in fields apart from their own specialties, and it would offer interested laymen a window onto the advance of all the sciences in a rapidly developing society. The editorial content of the magazine, featuring articles written by acknowledged leaders of the scientific disciplines, accompanied by attractive graphics and carefully edited by a superior journalistic staff, would make it unique, neither a professional journal along the lines of *Science* or *Nature* (both of them too technical for a general audience) nor simplified to the extent that nothing would remain but broad generalities or sensationalized trivialities.

The formula hit upon by Piel and his partners, as original in its own way as the more popular new forms created earlier in the century, Henry Luce's *Time*, the Wallaces' *Reader's Digest*, and Harold Ross's *New Yorker*, soon proved highly successful, despite the deeply felt complaint of one Philip E. Damon of Ames, Iowa, who wrote, shortly after the transition: "Man, oh man. You have ruined the finest shop and hobby magazine in the world. Gone highbrow." New readers, more attuned to the spirit of the age, were drawn by the prominence of the contributors, by the handsome layout, and most of all by the intellectual stimulation of the contents. Advertisers of all sorts

were attracted by the demographic profile of this new, increasingly affluent, and highly educated audience.

The creators of the new publication, which grew steadily fatter, glossier, and more prosperous, themselves reaped rich rewards—financial, social, and cultural—from the prestige of their creation. Gerard Piel in particular became a pillar of the American and international intellectual establishment, holder of close to a score of honorary degrees, a trustee of Phillips Academy, of Radcliffe and Tougaloo Colleges, and of New York University, winner of the UNESCO Kalinga Prize and numerous other honors. Piel's career as a recognized spokesman for the scientific estate is now reaching its apogee: upon stepping down as publisher of *Scientific American* this May, he is to take office as president-elect of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the nation's largest organization of professional scientists.

FOLLOWING its creators' philosophy, each issue of *Scientific American* offers about eight main articles designed to pique the interest of a wide variety of readers. The range of topics is so broad, from the technology of pork production to the philosophy of quantum mechanics, and the treatment of each so seri-

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ous, that it is difficult to see how any large fraction of the 650,000 domestic and 350,000 foreign-language subscribers could regularly read the magazine from cover to cover, unless they are equipped with minds, and reading appetites, like those of Philip Morrison, the MIT physics professor who has served for many years as the magazine's book editor and who manages to discuss each month a diversity of weighty tomes on a bewildering variety of unrelated topics. The mix of articles is such that at least one or two in each issue should appeal to anyone with an interest in some particular area of scientific endeavor, whether philosophico-mathematical, physico-chemical, biological, or socio-economic. Many of the articles are sufficiently authoritative to have given birth to a profitable spinoff activity of individual reprints and topical anthologies for high-school and college classroom use. As for the authors, 79, at latest count, have won Nobel Prizes—a selling point in the magazine's circulation promotions.

Rounding out the contents each month are a number of regular departments, including Morrison's book reviews, a column for home experimenters (probably the last relic of the old *Scientific American* spirit), and a news-and-comment feature called "Science for the Citizen" which summarizes and seeks to put in perspective recent advances in various areas of science and technology as well as significant developments in the political arena. For many years, a regular column of mathematical puzzles and reflections was contributed by Martin Gardner, but this has recently been replaced, first by a column written by Douglas Hofstadter, the mathematician and computer scientist whose best-selling book *Gödel, Escher, Bach* deals with deep mathematical and logical problems, and then more recently by a column discussing the recreational use of computers. This last feature is written by Brian Hayes, who is to replace Flanagan as editor at the same time that Gerard Piel's place as publisher is filled by his son Jonathan.

Providing an otherwise unavailable survey of all the sciences is not, however, the sole *raison d'être* of

Scientific American. As Piel in particular has made abundantly clear in thirty years of written and spoken pronouncements, the magazine also seeks to raise its readers' consciousness, to make them realize that science is not merely an intellectual endeavor but a vital part of modern civilization in all its aspects. Indeed, Piel has gone so far as to state that "science is the ultimate source of value in the life of mankind."

In the pages of *Scientific American* itself such overt ideological enthusiasm would be out of place, and Piel has in fact restricted the exposition of his ideas to those numerous occasions—public lectures, commencement addresses, and the like—which have offered him a personal forum. On the evidence of one published collection (*The Acceleration of History*, 1972), his ideas amount to those of a typical member of the liberal establishment, academic branch. This suggests that he is more likely to have projected his own predispositions and values onto science, however science is to be defined, than to have derived them from it.

IN ANY event, philosophical considerations are not relevant to the bulk of technically focused articles that the magazine's readers devour. Where the question of values does become relevant is in those articles dealing explicitly with political matters, and in particular with strategic issues.

Ever since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the connection between scientific advance and national security has been inescapable, and scientifically-oriented publications have paid close attention to new weapons and to American strategic doctrine. The most extreme example is the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, which actually owes its genesis to the guilt felt by some who had participated in the wartime mobilization of the sciences and who came to believe they had not demonstrated sufficient concern for the moral and ethical issues involved. Even purely professional groups like the American Physical Society provide space in their less specialized journals for discussions of strategic problems.

It is thus entirely appropriate that *Scientific American* do likewise. But the way in which these issues have been discussed in its pages has changed quite markedly since the early postwar period.

IN 1949, when the implications of nuclear weapons for the future of warfare were first being explored, one issue of *Scientific American* contained an article by P.M.S. Blackett, the Nobel Prize-winning British physicist, arguing that the nuclear monopoly then still enjoyed by the United States did not in fact confer very much in terms of a usable military advantage over the Soviet Union with its massive army; Blackett proposed that an attempt be made to negotiate an agreement trading off the U.S. nuclear advantage for the Soviets' conventional manpower. In an accompanying reply, the U.S. physicist Louis Ridenour pointed out that Blackett was merely repeating the line then being put forward by the Russians themselves, which to Ridenour was false in its actual understanding of the strategic and tactical significance of nuclear weapons; following Blackett's proposal, he wrote, would merely result in granting an advantage to the Soviets.

The technical details of this argument were promptly rendered moot by the explosion of the first Soviet atomic bomb. The subsequent decision by President Truman to authorize the development of the so-called "super," or hydrogen, bomb was in turn the subject of a series of articles in *Scientific American* by different authors. Not one of them could have been described as enthusiastic about the prospective new weapon, whose city-busting capability would make it more serviceable to the Soviet Union against the highly urbanized United States than to the United States against the Soviet Union. Hans Bethe, in an early version of a case that is still put forward today, regarded the decision as a mistake but thought its consequences could be mitigated by adopting a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons. Ridenour, while not questioning the logic of the decision, joined in deploring the secrecy under which

it had been taken, which he saw as inconsistent with the democratic process. Ralph Lapp explored possible defensive strategies against the bomb, such as population dispersal.

Aside from a 1958 article on the peaceful uses of nuclear explosions co-authored by the young Harold Brown, then a physicist on the staff of the Livermore weapons laboratory, references to nuclear weapons were scarce for the next decade or so, except in the book reviews of James R. Newman, a writer of grace on matters philosophical and mathematical, who grew vitriolic when confronted with opinions that contradicted his own fervent dismissal of any permissible role for nuclear arms.

Newman's attitude was a portent of what was to come. For the early 1960's began to see the end of all efforts to approach this subject in a spirit of disinterested scientific inquiry; from that point on, the conclusions of any *Scientific American* article dealing with the subject of weapons, strategic policy, or arms control seemed more theological than scientific in character. The doctrine of mutual assured destruction, or MAD, with its corollary that attempting to defend against nuclear attack is wrong in principle, became an unchallengeable dogma. New weapons systems proposed by administrations of every political stripe—Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, or Reagan—were uniformly attacked on the grounds that they would be ineffective, destabilizing, self-defeating, or all three, with little concern being given to the consistency of the argument. As a 1964 article by Jerome Wiesner and Herbert York stated: "There can be no technical solution to the problem of national security . . . one of the potentially destabilizing elements is the possibility that one of the rival powers might develop a successful anti-missile defense . . . defense against thermonuclear attack is impossible."

ARTICLES appearing over the past

twenty years have all seemed to adopt the line that advances in Soviet weaponry do not really matter, since they cannot possibly result in a convincing Soviet first-strike capability: any U.S. *response* to Soviet advances, however, is seen as dangerous and destabilizing, especially because it might lead the unsophisticated Russians to fear an *American* first strike. This curiously asymmetrical argument has been applied to many different situations.

Richard Garwin, for example, has proclaimed the need to restrain advances in U.S. capability against Soviet strategic-missile submarines, which he would allow free passage. Other writers in *Scientific American* regularly denounce new strategic approaches, especially if they include the development of counterforce weapons, as so much wasteful warmongering: "The improved counterforce capability proposed by the [Nixon] administration is . . . not only unnecessary and potentially costly but also likely . . . to increase the risk of nuclear war." The neutron bomb is stigmatized as "a weapon of doubtful utility that could result in an all-out nuclear exchange." The MX missile is damned as "an inappropriate response to a perceived vulnerability." And so forth.

The authors of these and many other similar articles can legitimately claim to be experts on the subjects they address. They have often held responsible positions, either in government service or as highly placed consultants, and their conclusions are shared by large and influential elements of the U.S. political, academic, and media elites. The process by which they reach those conclusions, however, has little claim to be considered scientific, or even logical in the normal sense of the word.

A good example of the curious thinking underlying the uniform hostility displayed in *Scientific American* to any proposed strength-

ening of the U.S. military position can be found in a 1969 article by the MIT political scientist George Rathjens. According to Rathjens, the "futility of searching for technological solutions to political problems" is proved by the fact that "a steady decrease in our national security has for over twenty years accompanied the steady increase in our military power." Most *Scientific American* writers would no doubt hold this to be even more valid today than when it was first published some fifteen years ago. Yet if the causal relationship implied by the latter assertion were truly a scientific hypothesis rather than a desperate leap of faith (or, in this case, delusion), the author should be required to defend it against the alternative hypothesis: namely, that regardless of the absolute level of U.S. military power, it is the far steadier increase in *Soviet* military power, combined with the clear Soviet willingness to exercise that power ruthlessly, which has caused the perceived decline in our national security. This latter hypothesis, which is certainly less counter-intuitive than the notion of an inverse relation between military strength and physical safety, also agrees with the bitterly won conclusion reached by every U.S. administration, not excluding that of Jimmy Carter, which has actually had to bear the responsibility of maintaining national security rather than merely theorizing about it.

ALTHOUGH *Scientific American* does little to demonstrate how scientific thought can properly be applied to the most important issue of the day, its position on this issue claims for itself the prestige and authority of science. Thus has this supposed champion and exemplar of detached observation and sober theorizing contributed to a process of politicization that will ultimately be as corrupting to science as the same process has already proved to other intellectual disciplines in our time.

Bartók at the Piano

Samuel Lipman

COMPOSERS of serious music in the 20th century have often complained about the mixture of incompetence and self-regard with which performers have allegedly played their works. The champion at this kind of complaint was Igor Stravinsky, who disliked the performances of such of his works as *The Rite of Spring* even when they elicited enthusiastic responses from the audience. Arnold Schoenberg too was at times unhappy about the way his works were played. In my own experience, Darius Milhaud was frequently caustic about performances of his music and that of his colleagues. And numerous lesser-known figures have oscillated wildly between trying to get their pieces programmed and then ascribing the inevitable failures to how these pieces were done.

Composers, one must assume, have always been persnickety about performances; one can hardly imagine a performer having gone with a light heart to play Beethoven's music for the master. Until recent times, however, there was a way to deal with the performance problem: the composer could execute the work himself. Composers like Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss were famous conductors, and Richard Wagner was by most accounts a great interpreter of the Beethoven symphonies as well as of his own music. Indeed, Stravinsky himself recorded, often more than once, the great majority of his orchestral pieces.

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But while some major composers have been conductors, the most significant medium for the composer-performer has been the piano or its predecessor instruments, the harpsichord and the organ. Much of the greatest music from Bach onward has been written for these keyboard instruments; and many of the composers responsible for this flowering have also been performing virtuosos. Among them were Bach himself, Mozart, Chopin, Schumann, and Brahms. Closer to our own time, Debussy, Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, and Prokofiev were recognized as great pianists. Even Stravinsky, though hardly in the virtuoso class, often played his own piano works in the 1920's and 1930's.

Considering that the phonograph has existed throughout this century, there are surprisingly few distinguished documents of the contemporary composer as pianist. On records, Debussy can dimly be heard as he plays accompaniments in 1904 for soprano Mary Garden. He can also be heard, more strongly, in piano-roll recordings of moderate sonic authenticity. Prokofiev is represented on a number of discs of his own music made in Europe in 1932 and 1935. Unfortunately, only one large-scale work—the Third Piano Concerto (1921)—is in this collection.¹ Rachmaninoff, as one of the two greatest pianists of his age (Josef Hofmann being the other), did make a substantial number of records, including all his piano concertos, the Paganini Rhapsody, and some of his smaller pieces as well. He also made recordings of music by other composers; two of these, one of the Chopin B flat minor Piano Sonata and the other of the Beethoven Sonata in G major,

opus 30, no. 3, for Piano and Violin (with Fritz Kreisler as his partner), are among the classics of the phonograph.² Of Stravinsky's playing, only one large-scale example is available: a somewhat aimless performance of his *Capriccio*, made in Paris in 1930³; another interesting but flawed recording, of the Concerto for Two Solo Pianos, made (again in Paris) in 1938 with his son Soulima, can be heard only on a tape copy at the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center.

GIVEN this relative paucity of material by composers demonstrating how they think their music should go, the appearance in 1981 of some thirteen LP's containing all the known piano playing of Béla Bartók—and a limited amount of spoken material as well—was an event of great interest in the musical community.⁴

Incontestably great as Rachmaninoff's playing was, he was hardly a modern composer; even Prokofiev now seems increasingly a phenomenon of the older romantic music rather than of the age of the avant-garde. Bartók, by contrast, was a wholly *modern* composer—perhaps the only one who also happened to be a pianist of renown.

During his lifetime, Bartók was esteemed not just for his performances of his own works, but also for the way he played the classics from Bach and Scarlatti to Chopin and Brahms. In 1905, at the age of twenty-four, he entered the Paris competition for the (Anton) Rubinstein Prize; his losing there to

¹ The LP collection of all the Prokofiev material was available some years ago as Angel (EMI) COLH 34.

² All the Rachmaninoff recorded performances were available, in five volumes of three LP's each, as RCA ARM 3-0260, 0261, 0294, 0295, and 0296. The works for piano and orchestra (ARM 3-0296) are still available.

³ Seraphim 60183.

⁴ *Bartók at the Piano 1920-1945*, Hungaroton LPX 12326-33. *Bartók Record Archives: Bartók Plays and Talks 1912-1944*, Hungaroton LPX 12334-38.

Wilhelm Backhaus could hardly be called an indignity. Shortly thereafter, in 1907, he received an appointment to the Academy of Music in Budapest, where he taught piano. During the next few years, he played in Spain, Portugal, and England, in addition to France. He also edited, in a pedagogical format, keyboard music by Bach, Couperin, Scarlatti, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert, and Chopin; in addition he made piano transcriptions of harpsichord and organ pieces by Italian masters of the 17th and 18th centuries.

After World War I Bartók undertook a purposeful expansion of his performing career. In 1922 he played in London and in Paris; thereafter, he made frequent tours of Czechoslovakia, England, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Rumania, and Switzerland. He played as a soloist and also gave duo recitals with such famous Hungarian violinists as Joseph Szigeti and Zoltán Székely (later the first violinist of the much admired Hungarian Quartet).

In the 1927-28 season Bartók made a tour of the United States where, playing programs largely of his own music, he impressed more as a pianist than as a composer. After his American tour, he went to the Soviet Union, appearing in Moscow, Leningrad, Odessa, Kharkov, and Kiev. He continued to play in the 1930's, and toward the end of the decade began to give concerts at two pianos with his second wife (and student) Ditta Pásztory Bartók. Following his decision to leave Nazi Europe in 1940, he gave an important recital at the Library of Congress in Washington with Szigeti; the solid program for this concert included the Beethoven "Kreutzer" Sonata, the Debussy Sonata, and the composer's own Second Sonata and First Rhapsody. Bartók went on playing the piano (and teaching) until close to his death in New York in 1945.

It was perhaps in part to provide for all this activity that Bartók wrote so much for the piano. In 1926, these works included the folk-derived *Out of Doors* Suite, the harsh and motoric Piano Sonata, and the propulsive First Piano Con-

certo; the concerto received its first performance at a contemporary music festival the next year with Bartók at the piano and Wilhelm Furtwängler conducting.

At this time too he started on an extended set of piano pieces called *Mikrokosmos*. This collection, eventually to number some 153 separate works, constitutes the most thoroughgoing attempt in our century to write music of progressive difficulty which can be used to introduce the student pianist not just to the piano or to music, but to contemporary piano music.

In 1930-31 Bartók wrote his Second Piano Concerto, another percussive and driving work, which he first performed in 1933 in Frankfurt am Main with the great conductor of modern music, Hans Rosbaud. His late career as duo-pianist with his wife was responsible for the writing of one of his most important works, the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion (1937); when Bartók orchestrated this piece in 1940, it became the Concerto for Two Pianos, and in this form the couple played it for the first time with Fritz Reiner and the New York Philharmonic in 1943. His wife, too, was responsible for what must be considered Bartók's last (almost) fully completed work, the Third Piano Concerto (1945). His hope in writing it, destined to be unrealized, was that, as a performance vehicle for her, it would be a source of income after his death.

MATCHED against this impressive list of large works, the Bartók recorded legacy seems always tantalizing, never conclusive. There are two problems to be faced here: the first is the sadly limited number of his own pieces that Bartók recorded, either commercially or privately; the second problem, more interesting than sad, goes to the very nature of the distinction between composition and performance.

The Bartók recorded material is divided into four parts: phonograph recordings made for commercial purposes; privately made recordings (surviving in often drastically incomplete form) of live performances; piano-roll transcriptions; and a few almost inaudible

home cylinders dating back as far as 1912, when Bartók was thirty-one. Of these four categories, only the first—the commercial recordings—is consistently satisfying.

Some of these recordings have been widely available before. They include the *Contrasts* (1938) with clarinetist Benny Goodman and Szigeti; the First Rhapsody for Violin and Piano (1928), also with Szigeti; and 32 pieces from the later sections of the *Mikrokosmos* (all made in 1940 for Columbia in America). Relatively unknown, and welcome in this excellent LP transfer, are the 78-RPM discs of his own music Bartók made in 1928 and 1929 for HMV in Budapest, in 1930 for Columbia in London, in 1936 for Patria in Budapest, and in 1937 again for Columbia in London. In addition to these (which were not, except for the three English Columbia discs, issued in the United States), the present set contains hitherto unreleased test pressings, made about 1929 in Budapest, of four sonatas of Scarlatti.

The second category of recorded material, that of live performances, includes the previously available 1940 Library of Congress concert with Szigeti and the Bartók husband-and-wife broadcast performance (with the services of two very overburdened percussionists) of the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion. Important because of their previous unavailability, though only ranging in sonic quality from merely acceptable to almost unlistenable, are radio broadcasts of Bartók as both soloist and ensemble player. While many of these primitively made recordings contain only small bits of movements and pieces, three large works are fortunately preserved here in their entirety. They are the Brahms Sonata in F minor for two pianos, played by Bartók with his wife in 1939; the Liszt *Concerto pathétique*, also for two pianos, played the same year by Bartók and the Hungarian composer and pianist Ernő Dohnányi; and Bartók's own First Rhapsody for Violin and Piano performed (also in 1939) by Bartók with the now forgotten Hungarian violinist Ede Zathureczky. One short solo work, the Brahms Capriccio in B

minor, opus 76, no. 2, is also here in complete form.

The many fragments presented in this compilation of live performances show Bartók playing alone, with his wife, and with orchestra. The composers represented are Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Debussy, and Bartók himself. While there is much important music here—in particular Bartók's Second Piano Concerto conducted by Ernest Ansermet and the Liszt Variations on a Theme of Bach ("Weinen, Klagen")—so limited are the excerpts in duration and in sound quality that (except for an almost complete performance of the Chopin Nocturne in C sharp minor, opus 27, no. 1) one can only gain hints as to what the real performances must have sounded like.

The piano-roll recordings in this collection are of two kinds, both transferred to disc via rerecording from the original rolls. The first batch, consisting of short pieces by Bartók including the *Rumanian Folk Dances* (1915), was recorded on Welte-Mignon rolls, probably in Berlin in 1920. The Welte process was relatively (though not very) successful in reproducing a pianist's individual tone color and nuances; as transcribed in the 1960's on a Steinway concert grand belonging to Arthur Rubinstein, the performances seem authentic enough. Somewhat less believable are the transcriptions, evidently put on disc some years ago, of a few Pleyel rolls Bartók seems to have made in Paris in 1923; this set of performances includes the driving *Allegro barbaro* (1911). When taken all together, the piano-roll recordings (no doubt because of the rigidities of the process) are musically inferior to both the commercial recordings and the off-the-air dubbings.

The private cylinders, the final category of recorded material in this collection, were sonically poor to begin with, and have been wretchedly handled by their owners and by the passage of time. Certainly in their fits and starts, their blasts and disappearances, they cannot alter the melancholy verdict on the relationship of Bartók to the phonograph: during his lifetime he was badly treated and often ignored

both as composer and as pianist. Some of the fault belongs to the inadequacies of the then available technology; some too must belong to the shortsightedness of the recording companies and, it goes without saying, the record-buying public. Some responsibility also must have been the composer's own: he was a loner who seemed to possess little gift for the pursuit of a career.

AND yet, incomplete as the Bartók recorded corpus is, it does throw a great deal of light on musical matters both pianistic and compositional. Since these Hungaroton records have appeared, there has emerged a veritable chorus of critical opinion proclaiming Bartók one of the greatest pianists of the age. That this opinion should be widespread in the composer's native Hungary is no surprise, since reasons of pride and politics combine to make every small country assiduous in honoring its own musical prophets; true as this observation is across the world, it has special relevance to socialist governments painfully searching for every possible shred of legitimacy.

But in the West too the huzzahs have been loud. The English critic Max Harrison, writing in the January 1982 *Gramophone*, found in these records "the profound musicality of the playing of one of the greatest musicians of our century." And here in America, *New York* magazine's Peter Davis wrote about what he called "Bartók's . . . warmly inflected, rhythmically expansive yet always very precisely articulated style . . . the subtle rubato effects, liquid phrasing, and gradual stoking of emotional fire [that] mesmerize the ear."

Yet well as Bartók undoubtedly played, and interesting as these records are, they do not support the conclusion that he was one of the immortals of pianism. Even in the very best of his solo playing—the small pieces of his own which he recorded for HMV in 1929—one finds a certain wayward quality, sometimes appearing as "charm," sometimes as an almost vulgar taste, and sometimes as a lack of involvement in the structure of the music.

Thus at the beginning of the very first LP record of this entire two-volume set, in the alternately gay and moody "Evening in Transylvania" (no. 5 of the *Ten Easy Pieces* of 1908), what impresses the listener at first as a real delicacy of feeling soon begins to seem an arbitrary dislocation of the natural rhythmic flow; in slow passages, the hands are, in a predictable way, not together; after a properly debonair execution of the first spirited syncopations, the return to the soulful beginning is marred by a harsh attack on the opening note of the section; overall, strange as it is to say, pianist Bartók seems disinclined to observe the scrupulous markings of composer Bartók.

In the next piece on the first record, the "Bear Dance" (no. 10 of *Ten Easy Pieces*), one is immediately seized by the virtuosity of Bartók's fast left-hand repeated notes, but here too the pleasure palls as the pianist's right hand, playing the chordal melody, makes a habit of rushing to the downbeat. The result seems perverse, as if a mannerism repeated often enough could thus justify its employment.

IN THE *Allegro barbaro*, a Prokofiev-like work demanding the utmost in steely wrists and easy coordination between the hands, Bartók is at the beginning fleet and effortless; as the short work gathers momentum, however, what had initially appeared easy turns out to be by turns slightly rushed and slightly labored. In seven of the *Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs* (1914-18), recorded about 1936 in Budapest, Bartók often loses control of the balance between the hands, allowing the left to drown out the right; at the end, in the enormously difficult section marked *quasi cornemuse*—like a bagpipe—the sixteenth-note ornamentation is indistinct, the whole effect becoming a rushed jumble. The first piece from *Three Rondos on Folk Tunes* (1916) finds Bartók laconic rather than simple in the affecting slow sections, and somehow frivolous in the fast ones—the performer again not taking seriously what the composer has written.

All these impressions are con-

firmed by the unreleased test pressings of four Scarlatti sonatas played by Bartók about 1929. The usually complete notes accompanying these LP's are not very helpful in this case, but it would seem that two sonatas were meant to go on each side of what must have been a 10" 78-RPM record. There thus may well have been time pressure on Bartók, forcing him to play very fast indeed in order not to exceed the limit of approximately three minutes per side. In any event, the playing is fast, often beyond what the listener can hear; the fingers race, and the music rushes. It is as if Bartók thought that getting everything over with quickly were a solid artistic virtue.⁵

Also demanding consideration are the 1940 Columbia discs of Bartók as soloist in numerous pieces from the *Mikrokosmos*, and as the partner of Benny Goodman and Szigeti in the *Contrasts* and of Szigeti in the First Rhapsody for Violin and Piano. Bartók's playing of the *Mikrokosmos* pieces seems didactic, perhaps expressing his own view of the works as educational in function; be that as it may, his performance is joyless in execution of the many peasant rhythms, and often clumsy even in the midst of some formidable keyboard feats of lightness and velocity. The by now fabled recording of the *Contrasts* displays a "cool" piece in a "cool" performance, with both Goodman and Szigeti cautious and Bartók's impact diminished by a combination of the subsidiary piano part and muffled recording of the instrument's characteristic clang. The recording with Szigeti of the Rhapsody, by now considered a classic too, seems excessively straight; the performance as a whole is driven and tense, mechanical rather than exciting. None of these three recordings communicates a sense of Bartók as a performing personality.

THE Library of Congress performance with Szigeti is Bartók's major recorded achievement as a chamber musician. Szigeti was a thoroughly serious violinist, whose playing of the great repertory was altogether free of the simpering cuteness so

characteristic of today's encounters between international celebrity violinists and profound music. In the Beethoven "Kreutzer" Sonata, a work in which the pianist must usually demonstrate his artistry by considerably staying out of the violinist's way, Bartók is especially strong and forthright; there is nothing here of the slightly mannered and withal routine approach which marks so much of his other playing. The performance of the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion, already disfigured by the incompetent playing of the percussionists, does not show excellent ensemble between the two pianists, and Bartók's playing in particular (he took the first part) seems almost fragile.

The newly available broadcast transcriptions do little to change the impression made by the more familiar Bartók performances. The Brahms F minor Sonata, without doubt the chief behemoth of the 19th-century two-piano literature, fails to achieve clarity in this performance by the Bartóks. The composer, not surprisingly, was a stronger pianist than his wife; in order to keep from drowning her out, he positioned his piano so that its tone was blocked by the raised lid of his wife's piano. As a result, she comes to the fore, while he remains tinkling in the background. When to this acoustical imbalance are added the brisk tempos and the somewhat rootless approach so frequent in Bartók's playing in general, the outcome is something of a muddle. In the case of several fragments from the Mozart Sonata in D major, K. 448, the same approach produces a jerky, hard-driven performance.

With the Bartók and Dohnányi performance of the Liszt *Concerto pathétique*—an unfamiliar warhorse indeed—Bartók's piano is again placed in an unfavorable position, and his tone is accordingly thin and distant. But even apart from the placement of their pianos, compared to Dohnányi's luxuriant but disciplined playing, Bartók's is nervous and febrile, suggesting on occasion that he (quite understandably) did not believe in the music's fustian rhetoric.

There is one performance here, that of the First Rhapsody for Violin and Piano, which provides a major discovery. The discovery is not Bartók's playing, but rather that of his colleague, the violinist Ede Zathureczky. Employing a big, lush tone, Zathureczky infuses Bartók's work with a strong emotional content solidly based on firm rhythm and an instinct for the harmonic and structural form of the music. Though the record notes explicitly state that "Zathureczky's performance of the First Rhapsody, when compared with Szigeti's concert and studio recordings of the same work, show how little another's personality could assert itself at Bartók's side," the evidence here is very much to the contrary. In addition to the palpably different mood coming from the Zathureczky performance—the work of a major violinist—the timing for his collaboration with Bartók is almost a full minute longer (in a piece lasting about ten minutes) than both performances with Szigeti.

Three short solo performances, taken from radio broadcasts, also deserve mention. Two small fragments from the Liszt Variations on a Theme by Bach are marked by Bartók's willful, quasi-improvisational indulgence, with rhythmic distortions and sentimental moonings present everywhere. It was the fragment of Bartók's playing of the Chopin Nocturne in C sharp minor, opus 27, no. 1, which provided the specific occasion for much of Peter Davis's praise I quoted earlier; to my ears, however, this performance is marked by interruptions of rhythmic flow and incessant backings away which make the music sound at best like early and only partially formed Debussy.

Bartók's performance of the Brahms Capriccio in B minor, opus 76, no. 2, present here in complete form, seems flighty and even hasty, without achieving the com-

⁵ Though it might be objected that any use of this test recording as a means of evaluating Bartók's playing is unfair because the disc was never released, it seems, from the notes accompanying the current set, that Bartók thought enough of the performance to have given the masters to his son, who cherished them.

poser's express indication of Allegretto; Bartók's hesitation on the second beats of both the second and fourth bars, in violation of the composer's clearly marked phrasing, adds a frivolous element to the entire enterprise.

It is clear, I think, that Bartók's accomplishments as a pianist were not all that considerable, either in his playing of the music of others or even in the playing of his own music. Other pianists, among them his student György Sándor,⁶ have been more successful in communicating the essence of his work than Bartók himself. This is not to say that we have been in a great era of Bartók performance; the leading pianists of Bartók's day, including Horowitz and Rubinstein, were sadly unconcerned with his music, and today's young virtuosos, as is evidenced by the current spate of dutiful Hungarian records, come through the loudspeakers as little more than pallid curators of a boring heritage. What good playing of Bartók there is today comes only in his First and Second Concertos, works which lend themselves to the steamroller and boiler-factory approach so congenial to pianists when they are young. Absorbing, vital, songful playing of Bartók's smaller solo masterpieces seems an art either lost or possibly never invented.

Perhaps the thing to say about Bartók's own pianism is that he played like a composer rather than a performer. To understand what this means it is necessary to realize that a composer does many things,

but a performer does only one. The composer writes all the notes of a piece as a more or less perfect replication of an immensely detailed, complicated, and multifaceted mental scheme. In its written state this scheme, now called a musical composition, still requires decoding by a performer. When a performer accomplishes this decoding well, when he is able to select identifiable elements—melody, phrasing, rhythm, harmony, architecture, timbre, and so on—and communicate them, he is said to have a *conception*, and to be an artist; if a performer takes these elements from his own gifts rather than from the work of art he is interpreting, he is said to have a *style*, and to be a star.

Yet no matter how well he does, the performer can only have utilized a few elements of a work's content or, in the case of the star, managed to substitute himself for the work altogether. The upshot is that there are innumerable ways, most of them seemingly of equal validity, to perform a composition. Which one the listener gets depends upon the exact nature of the selection the individual performer makes as he goes about his task of decoding.

For a composer, by contrast, every note he writes is of equal importance, because every note is an equal component of his aural vision; every part is the whole, and the whole is composed of every part. Thus when Bartók plays his own work, he is presenting all the musical elements he saw fit to put down in the music, not just those

he has decided that we as listeners will be able to perceive and respond to. Because he does not pick and choose, we are not able to either, and Bartók's approach seems to go from disinterest to uninterest. This may well account for the impression of waywardness conveyed by Bartók's performances. To see in such performances the virtues which critics have attached to this piano compilation is not to listen, but to succumb to that sentimentality which finds profundity in technological dimness, the passage of time, and the tragedy of physical martyrdom.

But to leave the whole matter on this negative note would be a mistake. Bartók was a great composer, and in particular a great composer for the piano. He wrote supremely well for the piano because it was an instrument he understood supremely well. As a result, his pieces, all the way from the touching sentiments of the *Mikrokosmos* to the pile-driving sonorities of the Sonata, from the dry and mysterious Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion to the folk-evocative Third Concerto, are (to paraphrase a famous remark of Artur Schnabel about performance in general) masterworks greater than any single performance of them—his own or anyone else's—can ever be.

⁶ Sándor was the first pianist to record Bartók's Third Concerto, with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Eugene Ormandy about 1946. Until recently this performance was available as Columbia Special Products P 14155. Sándor's recording of all the Bartók solo music is available in three volumes as Vox SVBX 5425/6/7.

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The Power of Ideas

MAYOR. By EDWARD I. KOCH. Simon & Schuster. 364 pp. \$17.95.

Reviewed by NORMAN PODHORETZ

EDWARD I. KOCH is certainly one of the most popular mayors New York City has ever had. Although he won his first term in 1977 by a very narrow margin, he was reelected to a second by a 75-percent majority, "the biggest majority a New York City mayor has ever received in modern times," as he himself describes it. Between elections, his approval ratings have also been extraordinarily high with almost every group in the city, the significant exceptions being the black and Hispanic communities, and especially their more vocal spokesmen. According to Charles Rangel, the Harlem Congressman, "Anyone else who would say and do what Ed Koch says and does, people would refer them to a psychiatrist." And the city's leading black newspaper, the *Amsterdam News*, goes even farther: "There is a cancer growing on the mayoralty of New York just as surely as cancer grew on the Presidency of Richard M. Nixon. . . . This cancer is replete with lies, distortions, insult, innuendo, sarcasm, vindictiveness, ruin, arrogance. . . ."

There is also another group whose attitude toward Koch is less than wildly enthusiastic—the people he calls "the radicals in the Democratic party," but who are known nowadays to almost everyone else as liberals. "By the radicals," writes Koch, "I am talking about the Bella Abzugs and the Herman Badillos. I am talking about the elitists and many of those who are in the Reform clubs." He is also talking, although he does not say so in so many words, about most of the journalists who cover or comment on local politics for the *New York Times*, the *Daily News*, and the *Village Voice*.

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"The radicals don't like me," says Koch. Indeed they don't. Among the epithets they have lately hurled at him are "liar," "psychotic," and "racist." One columnist, Russell Baker of the *New York Times*, offers him mock praise for being candid about his "meanness of spirit," for swaggering about his arrogance, and boasting about his absolute lack of humility. Sydney Schanberg, also of the *Times*, manages to compare Koch in a single column both to the devil and to "a foreign dictator," and Eliot Fremont-Smith in the *Village Voice*, likening him to a two-year-old toddler, adds, "Holy shit, this could be a Hitler. Thank God he's still a kid."

WHAT has ignited this explosion of invective is the appearance of Koch's book *Mayor*. Although he calls it an autobiography, *Mayor* contains almost nothing about Koch's personal life; it is, in fact, the memoir of a public official. But it differs from the standard such memoir in two respects: first, that it has been published while the author is still in office; and second, that it displays a degree of candor unprecedented in the books of public officials even when they are dealing with the distant past, let alone with the living present.

As to the first, there has been a good deal of speculation about "why Koch did it." His own explanation is that

no matter how interesting books on public life are, if they are published long after the events occurred and when the individual who was in the eye of the hurricane is no longer in office and gone from the scene, those books are purchased and placed on coffee tables and read by very few and have no major impact.

He did it, then, because he wanted to make sure that his book would be read. If that was indeed his main purpose, he has succeeded perhaps even beyond his most heated expectations. Not only has there been far more talk about this book than—to cite only one recent example—Jimmy Carter's memoirs,

but it has also reached the top of the best-seller list. "In a million years," Koch's publisher has been quoted as saying, "we couldn't have planned it better—and we plan pretty well."

While by no means loath to accuse Koch of writing this book out of simple financial greed, however, his critics have not been satisfied with that explanation. Some have seen the book as the opening gun in his campaign for a third term as Mayor; others have seen it as a clever tactic for diverting attention from (in Schanberg's catalogue of failures) "broken subway trains that are being run by rhetoric rather than repair, . . . criminal-justice systems that are unraveling, . . . sidewalks that have become living space for a growing population of discarded refugees, and . . . streets that are being allowed to degenerate into foxholes and trenches"; and at least one reviewer (Gay Talese) thinks that "the Mayor nurtures hopes of sitting—not now, but in the future—in the White House" and that he has published this book because "all the national attention it will doubtless bring him might provide the blast-off that will propel him into the mighty blue yonder of Air Force One."

The problem with these speculations is that *Mayor* is not exactly calculated to do what campaign biographies are supposed to do or, for that matter, what politicians are supposed to aim for. The objective in running for office is to win new friends, not to lose old ones; to cut down on the hostility of the opposition, not to exacerbate it; to reassure, not to provoke. On the other hand, it is possible that Koch expects *Mayor* to do him more political good than harm. He may already have written off the people he has antagonized with this book, and he may believe that the people who support him will be reinforced and mobilized rather than repelled.

BUT the truth is that none of these effects, whether for better or for worse, would have been felt if not

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for the other unusual feature of *Mayor*—its astonishing candor. If Koch had written a memoir as bland as the typical specimen of this genre usually is, the fact that it had come out while he was still in office would have seemed only mildly interesting, if even that. It is only because Koch says what he really seems to think, especially about other public figures, that everyone has been wondering “why he did it.”

Koch’s unflattering references to many of the people he has worked with, not to mention those he has worked against, have already become notorious. And no wonder. It is not so much a matter of the epithets he uses (“nuts,” “wackos,” and so on) as his breathtaking bluntness:

Bella Abzug . . . is so radical. . . . She and I have never gotten along, and I don’t hold it against her. There are so many other things I hold against her, I don’t need that one to add to it.

I made both [former Mayor Robert] Wagner Senior and [former Governor] Hugh Carey ashamed of themselves much as those two guys ever could be embarrassed.

Herman Badillo . . . is very shrewd politically. . . . But no one could work with him. . . . And that is why they didn’t want him in the Carter administration. They didn’t trust him. They knew that in the end he would be standing outside the White House calling them names.

As is evident from some of these comments, Koch can be almost as candid about himself as he is about others. He freely admits to vindictiveness, saying that it is his rule in politics always to get even; on various occasions he allows the streak of cruelty in his character to show through; and he openly proclaims his perversity (“Now you have to understand, any time someone asks me not to do something, I think, well, I am going to do whatever I want to do”). He is also capable of making fun of himself, as when he reminisces about campaigning in Miami Beach for Jimmy Carter in 1979:

Wolfie’s Restaurant on Collins Avenue is the premier Jewish

delicatessen in Miami Beach. I had arranged to meet my eighty-five-year-old father there. The press had taken over the rear half of the restaurant and made it over into a TV studio. . . . At 6 o’clock my father entered the restaurant.

I said: “Papa.”

He said: “Eddie.”

“Papa.”

“Eddie.”

It was as if we hadn’t seen each other since the last war.

My favorite example of how Koch can make fun of himself, however, is not included in this book. Once he was asked to pose with a tiger, and when he refused, it was suggested that the Mayor might be a coward. “The Mayor is not a coward,” Koch retorted, “and the Mayor is also not a schmuck.”

Wisecracks and one-liners suitable for quotation are not the only, or even the most revealing, specimens of Koch’s candor. The main thing he does along these lines is to allow us a rare glimpse into the private dealings that politicians have with one another—the way they talk, and even the way they think, when there are no cameras or reporters or crowds around. Some of this comes through in the stories Koch tells about his own campaigns: who supported or did not support him and why and how he then responded. Some comes through in his accounts of the high points of his period in office—hirings; firings; union negotiations; meetings with black groups, Jewish groups, gay-rights activists; lobbying sessions in Albany and Washington; contacts with the press. Koch has been accused of distorting—or lying outright—in his telling of several of these stories. Yet whether or not every detail is accurate, there can be no doubt that what Koch gives us is a generally truthful picture of how the political world works from day to day and sometimes even from hour to hour.

If Koch’s candor about the political process is what has enraged his colleagues (particularly, of course, those he speaks of in unflattering terms), it is his candor about political issues that has most upset his critics, both black and

white, in the liberal community. Though he himself comes out of that very community (he once headed the Village Independent Democrats, the leading Reform club in the city), Koch has by now broken with it in his overall political perspective as well as in the position he takes on a number of critical questions.

These people, he says, “want to remake the world,” but he has come to the conclusion that this is not possible. “You can fix parts, but you can’t remake the world.” And just as he rejects their “ideological leaning” to the “radical Left,” he has no use for their “elitism”: “They are a very inbred group of very rich people who go around telling everybody what to do and how to suffer.” He, by contrast, is “an ordinary guy with special abilities” who wants “the things that the average person wants. And so I do the things that the average New Yorker would do if he or she were the Mayor.”

This ordinary guy, this average New Yorker, is a member of the middle class, and it is accordingly for the middle class that Koch speaks. “You know why? Because they pay the taxes; they provide the jobs for the poor people.” He laments the fact that “we’re not able to do as much for them economically as I would like, but at the very least, I’m gonna recognize the sacrifices that they make.”

It is here, I think, that we come to the heart both of Koch’s popularity with the voters and his unpopularity with his liberal critics. So far as most New Yorkers are concerned, Koch is one of them. In his informality of dress, his raciness of speech, his irreverence, his humor, he comes close to being the ideal type of the average New Yorker. Even the way he flaunts and revels in his Jewishness has contributed to his popularity with such other groups as the Italians and the Irish, who evidently see in this brazen display a legitimization of their own ethnicity as well.

In all this, Koch is at the farthest possible remove from his predecessor, John Lindsay. If Koch is virtually a perfect embodiment of the average New Yorker, Lindsay was

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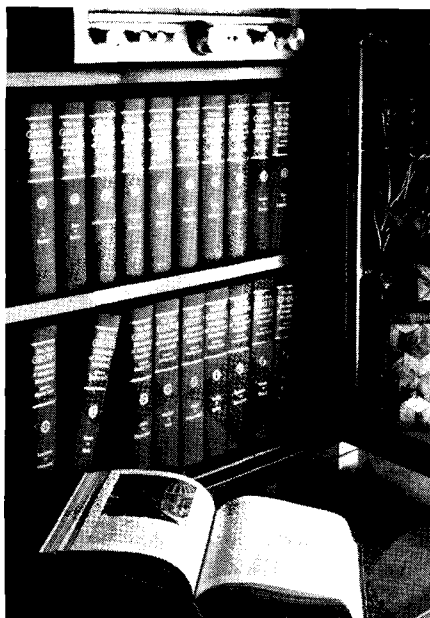
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the very model of the city's elites. Not only was he actually a WASP; he looked and carried himself like one sent by central casting. He also seemed to think that the interests and values of the city's white ethnic groups were the main obstacle to the achievement of justice for blacks and Hispanics.

This idea, so widespread during Lindsay's time as Mayor within the liberal establishment of New York (which, of course, included and still includes a large number of Jews), continues to hover below the surface of political debate in the city, and now and again it shows through in attacks on Koch himself.

Listening to some of these attacks, one might imagine that New York under Koch has been grinding its heels in the faces of the poor and the non-white minorities. In fact, however, as Koch writes:

We spend, in the City of New York, four billion four hundred million dollars on Medicaid and welfare. Can you imagine that? Four billion four hundred million dollars. And of that, one billion one hundred million comes right out of local-tax levy dollars, out of our budget, and that goes overwhelmingly to non-white people. . . . Let's take the Board of Education. That Board of Education spends three billion dollars. Of the children who go to school, 71 percent are non-white.

Conversely, listening to Koch's frequent affirmations of his opposition to reverse discrimination, or preferential treatment for blacks and Hispanics in hiring and promotion, one might imagine that every single job in his administration has been filled on a completely color-blind basis. Yet for all that he has "never been and never could be" for racial quotas, Koch did not hesitate to promise during his first campaign that he "would appoint more blacks to high positions in the administration than had held office in the last three administrations combined: those of Wagner, Lindsey, and Beame." It took him a few years to keep this promise, but by December 1983, he tells us proudly, he had exceeded the 27-percent target (or should we, following Koch's own example, mince no words and call it a 27-percent quota?).

But if Koch's administration spends most of its budget on the poor (who in New York City, though not in the nation as a whole, are overwhelmingly non-white), and if he has practiced reverse discrimination in all but name, why is he always under attack for being anti-black? One reason is that he most emphatically does *not* practice reverse discrimination in the way he talks to non-whites. Others may feel that "racial sensitivity" requires taking a special tone toward non-whites; Koch (in my judgment rightly) regards this as patronizing and even as racist. Accordingly he addresses blacks and Hispanics in exactly the same blunt voice he uses in speaking to everyone else; and this he regards (again, in my judgment, rightly) as a mark of respect and an expression of his belief in equality.

In addition to rejecting "racial sensitivity" in his dealings with non-whites, Koch has rejected reverse discrimination in *principle*. No matter that he set a racial quota for himself and filled it; what really seems to count is the fact that he attacks the *idea* of quotas. For in doing so, he refuses to accord legitimacy to the principle, and it is the principle that people are fighting over even more than the practice. The outrage Koch provokes, no less than the enthusiasm he inspires, can thus be seen as a decisive demonstration that ideas are often (always?) more important than policies even in a realm like politics where the opposite is usually assumed to be the case.

Teaching and Learning

HORACE'S COMPROMISE: THE DILEMMA OF THE AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL. By THEODORE SIZER. Houghton-Mifflin. 320 pp. \$16.95.

Reviewed by CHESTER E. FINN, JR.

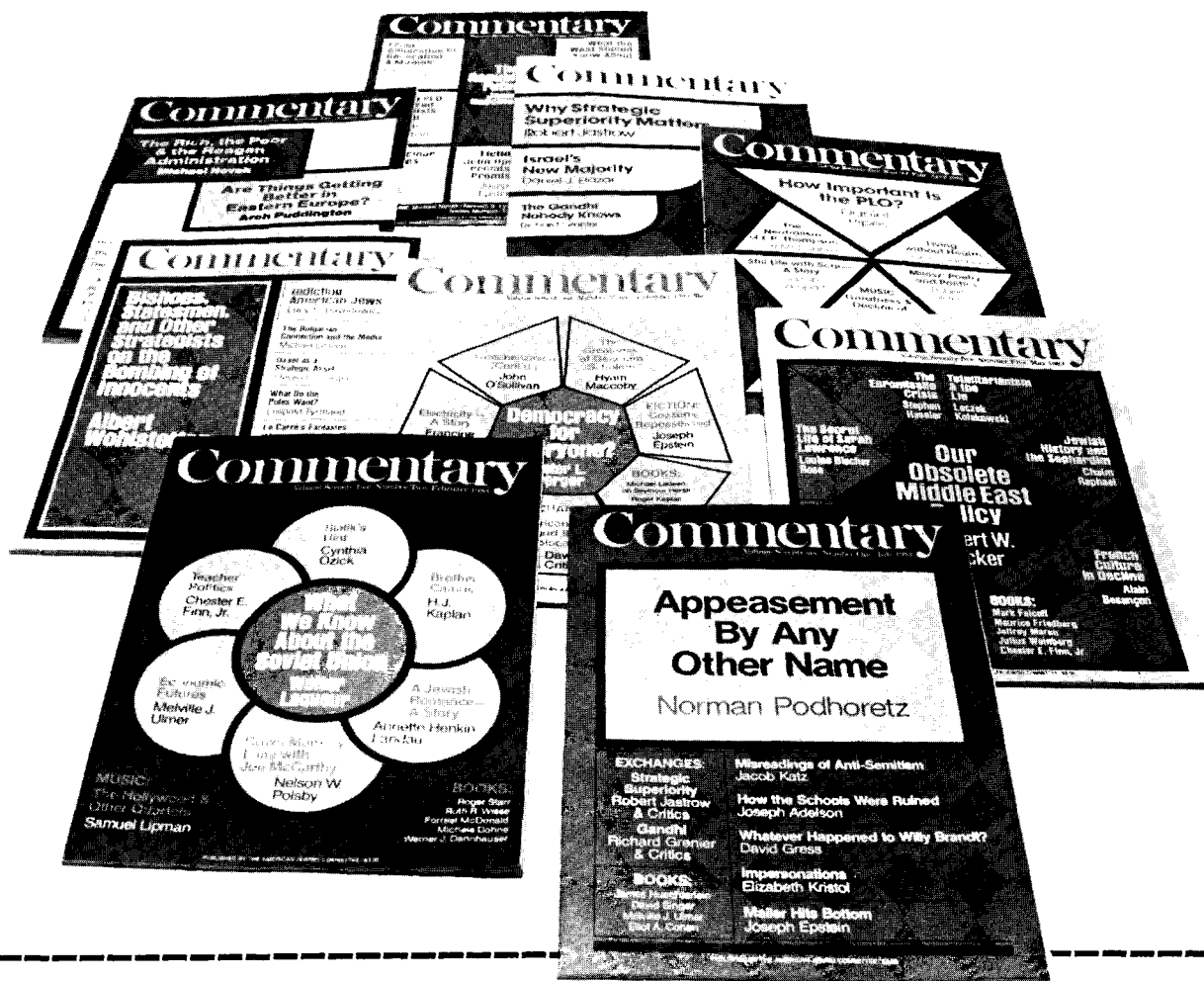
BESIEGED and benumbed as we already are by proliferating studies of American education, we might fairly wonder what could pos-

CHESTER E. FINN, JR. is professor of education and public policy at Vanderbilt University.

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sibly justify another one. Yet even after nearly two years of commission reports, task forces, presidential hoopla, gubernatorial activism, and a thousand solemn conferences, TheodoreSizer's book is, initially, a refreshing addition to the literature.

For one thing, it acknowledges and celebrates the existence of private schools, institutions which educate more than four million children but which were banished from the pages of all the recent reports on education. For another thing, it is written primarily from the standpoint of the teacher and the student, rather than from atop some public-policy pinnacle, and its glimpses into actual schools and classrooms are far more realistic—and sympathetic—than those offered by the competition. What is more, the prose is brisk, clean, and nearly free of "educationese."

Unfortunately, it is also nearly free of educational content. As with a fizzy drink made from chemical sweeteners, the initial refreshment is not accompanied by much nutrition. The compromising Horace of the title turns out not to be the great Roman poet and satirist so well-remembered by veterans of fourth-year Latin, but one Horace Smith, a fifty-three-year-old suburban high-school English teacher who moonlights at a liquor store. His compromise—a real and painful one skillfully drawn by Sizer—is the balance he has struck between the bottomless instructional needs of his too numerous students and what he is able to supply within the constraints of fifty-minute periods and twenty-four-hour days. Horace is no loafer: as Sizer makes clear, he is in fact an exemplary teacher, severely limited in his pedagogical effectiveness by the circumstances within which he must function.

Such problems are real enough and deeply frustrating to the dedicated teacher. Five classes a day of thirty or so youngsters each; students who function at many different levels of ability, preparation, and motivation; short class periods punctuated by announcements, messengers, and record-keeping—this can be pretty discouraging to the person who became an English instructor because he loved literature

and wanted to initiate children into its joys.

We instinctively empathize with Horace and want to alter his school both so that he will be able to accomplish more and so that he and others like him will want to continue teaching, mindful as we are that the alternative is a cadre of practitioners entering the classroom not because they love their subjects but because they weren't smart enough, ambitious enough, or well-enough educated to get better jobs.

But empathy is not enough. The book's troubles begin with the matter of exactly what Horace's students are supposed to end up knowing. What should be the content of a good secondary education? This is never a trivial question, and especially not at the present time, when the intense interest being paid to school reform by governors, legislatures, boards of regents, business leaders, even university presidents, has created a rare opportunity to turn the smorgasbord of elective courses in family living and revolutionary movements into some semblance of an orderly curriculum.

Yet Sizer declines to prescribe content. Worse, he comes very close to arguing that the choice of content does not really much matter, that any book or fact or problem or event is as suitable as any other—at least in the hands of a gifted teacher—for coaching an eager pupil in the necessary intellectual plays.

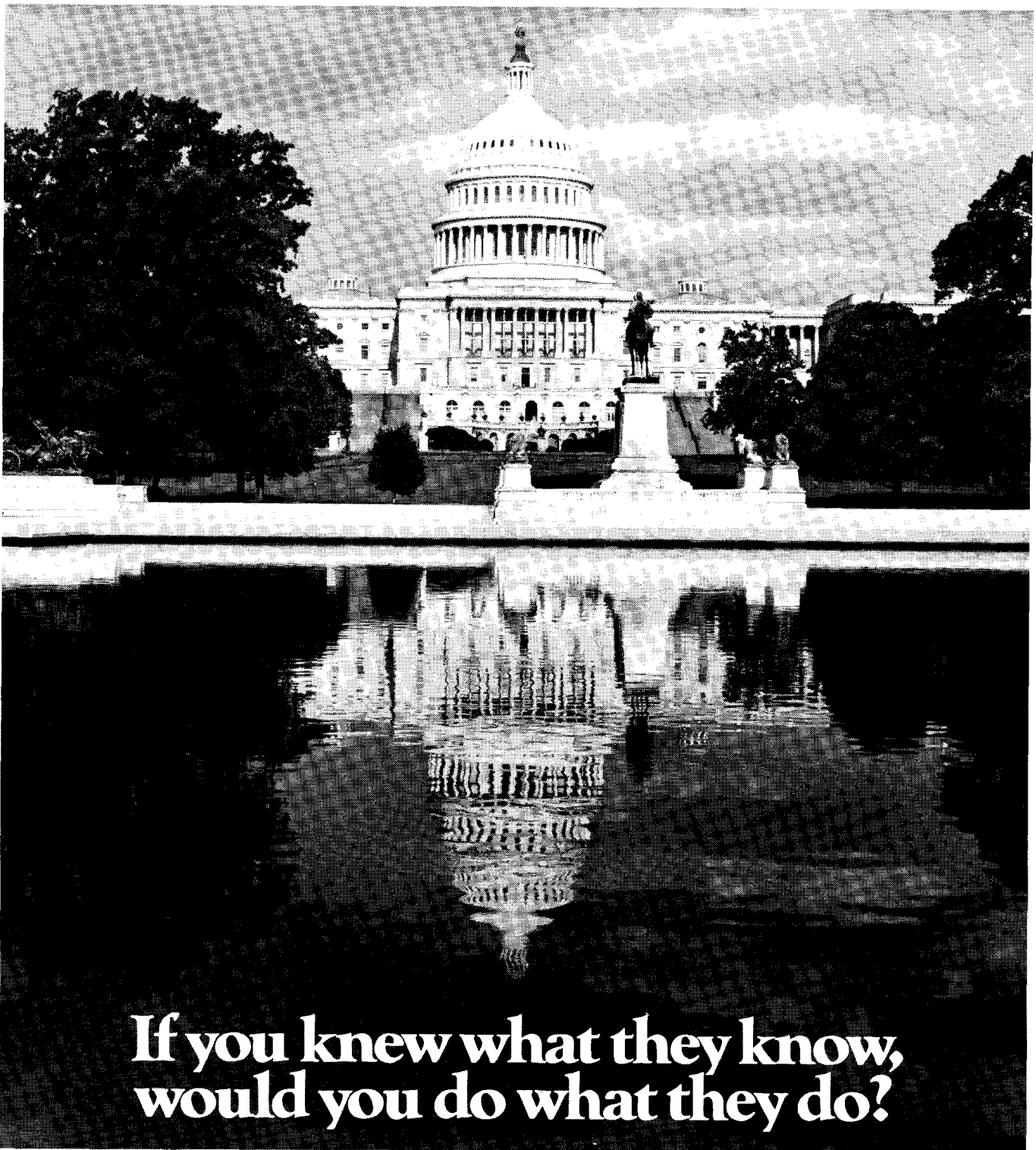
Horace's Compromise is indeed splendid on "cognitive skills," both the simple ones (decoding words on a page, handling number problems) and the important advanced ones like abstract reasoning, clear exposition, and analysis. It borrows heavily from Mortimer Adler's *The Paideia Proposal** and displays comparable sophistication about the nature of various intellectual processes and the pedagogical approaches most apt to develop them. Anyone successfully completing the required part of a secondary education designed by TheodoreSizer would have gained a lot more skills than most high-school students acquire today, and would in that sense be better prepared to cope with the challenges of further education and of modern life.

But he would know very little about the society he was entering, about its heritage, its works of art, its internal tensions or its external threats. He would have acquired little or none of what E. D. Hirsch, Jr. has termed "cultural literacy."

This bobtailed education results from an insidious combination: Sizer's beatification of pedagogy itself—the act of teaching—together with a relative indifference to curriculum content, and his minimalist view of "the essential claims of the state" with respect to education. Those claims, he insists, are precisely three: literacy, numeracy, and "civic understanding," the last a welcome addition here defined as "a grasp of the basis for consensual democratic government, a respect for its processes, and acceptance of the restraints and obligations incumbent on a citizen." But that is as far as Sizer goes, at least in compulsory education. "Once those minima are demonstrably reached," he says, "the state has no right whatsoever to compel a citizen to attend school" or "to compel her or him to learn anything else." All subsequent education would thus be voluntary—available, even enticing, but optional.

This vision is as audaciously attractive as it is outrageously inadequate. It may be possible to shrink most of the problems that beset American secondary education by eliminating all youngsters who meet Sizer's "minima" and thereupon decide they have had enough of schooling. And there is no denying that too many people today—working in offices, wandering the streets, and sitting in college classrooms, as well as those still in school—never do attain minimum levels of much of anything. But do the "claims" of society upon its children really stop short of Shakespeare, Emerson, and Frost, of Plato, Locke, and Marx, of Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt? Leaving aside entirely the demands of technological literacy and scientific competency, are we really prepared to conclude, with Sizer, that history, literature, and philos-

* See the review by Samuel Lipman, COMMENTARY, January 1983—Ed.



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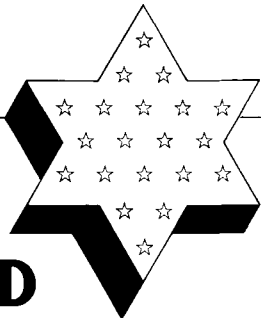
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ophy are, strictly speaking, electives, and that the entire heritage of Western civilization is merely an educational option, lying outside the domain of that which the society may reasonably oblige its youngest members to learn? Is it really an "abuse of state power," as Sizer suggests, to require teenagers not only to ponder the implications of the Bill of Rights (which he sensibly advises as a basic text for "civic understanding") but also to read a bit of Melville, a little Conrad, a smidgen of Longfellow, to examine the conceptions of justice and morality in *To Kill a Mockingbird* or the wellsprings of character in *Abe Lincoln Grows Up*?

To be sure, Sizer does not rule out the possibility of such study. He merely excludes it from the compulsory part of education. In truth, his idealized high school, trimmed down to four departments, with far fewer students per teacher, and with the day vastly more flexible than at present, is a beguiling notion, as are his suggestions for the virtual exclusion of vocational training and the deemphasis on athletics and other extracurricular activities. Himself a historian, teacher, and former high-school headmaster (as well as one-time dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education), Sizer depicts a school that would be far more intellectually challenging than most are today. It would be a school populated by outstanding teachers free from the harassments of meddlesome administrators, and by motivated, spontaneously well-behaved students who have already acquired the essential skills and are continuing their studies because they want to.

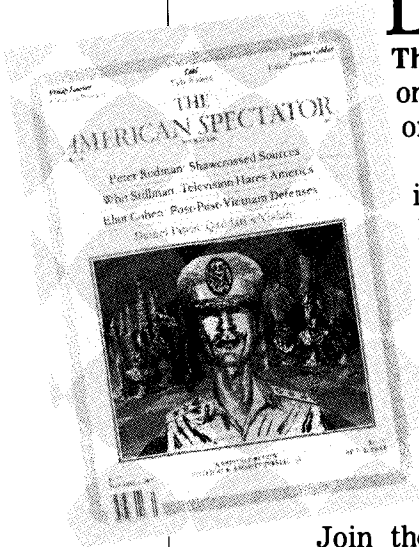
SOME critics have suggested that this imaginary school looks awfully like Phillips Academy, the superb private school that Sizer previously headed. The implication is that *Horace's Compromise* suffers from an advanced case of educational elitism. In fact, I believe, the opposite may be more true: the book reflects an extraordinarily optimistic, even romantic, neoprogressivism that is slightly reminiscent of A.S. Neill and Summerhill. Sizer appears to believe both that youngsters will only learn that which they

want to learn when they are motivated to learn it and that, given the right institutional circumstances, practically all youngsters will eventually want to learn practically everything that adults might want them to.

Sizer's feeling for adolescents is deep and sensitive, and his portraits of them as individuals are vivid and affectionate. He correctly points out that a number of schools, blindly following regulations specifying what must be "covered" in which courses, engage in the utter folly—and unintentional cruelty—of handing an eight-hundred-page world history textbook to "Dennis," a tenth grader who has never really learned to read; that many a "Miss Romagna" never engages the intellectual participation of "Melissa"; and that it is far too common for "Mr. Brody," slightly intimidated by his students, to enter into a "Conspiracy for the Least" with them, whereby the teacher makes practically no demands and in return the youngsters refrain from hassling him. But the assumption that seems to underlie the entire book is that (except for those pupils with chronic discipline problems, whom Sizer rightly insists be sent out of school) the institutional arrangements of the high school should accommodate themselves to the impulses and anxieties of the teenage population rather than the knowledge and priorities of the adults who presumably have something to teach. Sizer is ostentatiously non-judgmental about the students, reporting calmly on his observation of drug deals, libidinous displays, even some ugly peer behavior, in the schools he has visited. The only adolescent trait he explicitly condemns is "docility."

SINCE the dawn of the 20th century, American education has been riven by two competing approaches: molding the child to the standards and expectation of the school, or shaping the school to the interests and enthusiasms of the student. *Horace's Compromise* does not fall completely into the latter camp; indeed, one suspects that Horace Smith himself would be uncomfortable there. But it is there that the author's sincere reformist zeal ap-

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pears to focus, and it is in this crucial respect that Sizer differs from the National Commission on Excellence in Education, from most other contemporary school critics, and certainly from the lay boards and elected officials who are now striving to strengthen the educational systems of their states and communities.

Sizer, too, will have a chance to put his ideas into practice. He is moving to Brown University (an institution whose undergraduate curriculum is celebrated for its lack of requirements) to head the education department and, from that perch, to organize a network of public and private high schools that will voluntarily transform themselves into places where Horace will have to make fewer and less painful compromises. We should wish Sizer and Horace Smith well. We should even consider sending our children to their schools, for the teaching there will be superb and the students will all be eager. But

will any of them be motivated to read the poems written two millennia ago by the other Horace? And if not, will any of them be obliged to do so, on the grounds that there are some things every educated person ought to know?

The Rites of Zion

CIVIL RELIGION IN ISRAEL. By CHARLES S. LIEBMAN and ELIEZER DON-YEHIA. *University of California Press*. 308 pp. \$24.95.

Reviewed by DAVID VITAL

THERE is something to be said for George Eliot's dictum that "the happiest nations have no history." One way or another, the Jews are a people encumbered by their past: the past as history, the past as

DAVID VITAL is professor of political science at Tel Aviv University and the author of *Zionism: The Formative Years*, among other books.

tradition. No doubt, some Jews revel in it. Others wish to be free of it. Most seem uncertain or downright ill-at-ease when it confronts them. Accordingly, mixed feelings and confusion of mind pervade Jewish life, public no less (and perhaps more) than private. There is an important sense in which all the major social, religious, and political movements within Jewry over the last two centuries have constituted so many efforts to accommodate the past to the present and the present to the past.

So it has been, famously, with Zionism. Would-be reformers of Jewry *par excellence*, the 19th-century Zionists were (with rare exceptions) as muddleheaded as others in their approach to the religious tradition to which they tended (as did most other schools in Jewry) to assimilate the historic past. Therein lay the roots of some of the greatest quarrels and divisions in the old movement and the origins of much of the ideological and political debate in Israel today.

The traditional view of the past holds crucial elements in it to be wholly or partly of a sacred character, deriving their significance from a divine order; and because divine, binding. But the locus of much of the past was the Diaspora. The Zionists wished to get away both from political subjugation in the Diaspora and, necessarily, from a view of Jewish history that incorporated the divine: they wished to be free agents. Nonetheless they were unwilling totally to jettison the historic past. They wished to preserve a great deal of it.

THE trouble was that retaining the past invariably meant retaining some of the religious tradition as well. And, indeed, in practice, no sooner had the mainstream Zionists (of the Left no less than the Right) observed that the thread was about to snap, than a rush ensued to let substantial components of the tradition back in again, usually with much bowing and scraping and pious denials of hostile intent. So it had been when the matter first blew up in the context of the fight over Herzl's 1903 project to locate the Jewish homeland in East Africa. So it was in the middle 1950's when a

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horrified Labor minister of education found that he and his predecessors had done their work too well, and that Israeli children took a dim view of the long dark millennia of exile. The anxious, emotional response was a huge effort to reinject "Jewish consciousness" (hardly distinguishable from religious knowledge) into the national school curriculum, and to reinterpret the history of the Jews so as to lighten as many of the shadows that lay upon it as possible.

But, again, to speak of the past was to speak of the exile. And if the exile was not all travail and tears and indignity, what was the *raison d'être* of Zionism? Why Israel? Two answers were possible. One, logically unsatisfactory but historically plausible, was that Zionism and Israel were particular developments, rooted in particular events and tendencies, which ran parallel to the exile but did not entail its delegitimation. The other answer was much more daring. It was that Zionism, and notably the triumph of Israel in 1948 (reconfirmed in 1967), was part of a large providential scheme; far from being antithetical to the tradition, Zionism was a sort of epiphenomenon of it. That it was a largely secular movement and contained great numbers of atheists, blasphemers, and other heretics hardly mattered; objectively (as the Marxists might have said, and as the followers of Chief Rabbi Kook did say) it was doing God's will.

In any event, the door had been thrown open and tradition (only very moderately qualified) was being rushed through in what was beginning to look like the swiftest ideological takeover in modern Jewish political history. Had that education minister unwillingly let in a Trojan horse, out of whose belly the forces that would take over the government and national leadership were to descend two decades later? That is one possible, although highly limited, interpretation of the political upset of 1977 and all that followed. What is certain is that, in one way or another, the terms in which it is now possible to justify policy in Israel have changed greatly in the course of the last quarter-century or so. In the language of

the authors of this important and instructive book, the beliefs and rites that are the building blocks of Israel's "civil religion" have changed and are continuing to change.

Civil Religion in Israel is a serious and exceptionally valuable attempt to come to grips with this slippery subject (slippery in two ways: intrinsically, and because it is in constant flux). The authors have gone

about it in the way social scientists tend to do, namely, by imposing a fairly rigid analytical scheme upon a mass of observed data—data of all sorts, ranging from literary evidence to the results of opinion polls. They argue that four distinct sets of belief and ritual may be discerned. First came that which obtained during the early Zionist-socialist stage in which the pioneer, the kibbutz, the mystique of agriculture, and general egalitarian utopianism were

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central components of a system of
values by which almost all in Jew-
ish Palestine tended to measure
themselves (and others). This was
the stage at which the greatest effort
was made to rummage for what was
usable (and convertible) in the great
storehouse of traditional belief: re-
writing the Passover Haggadah and
speaking of a covenant with the
land rather than with the Almighty,
for example. The approach was
bold and often imaginative. Its
adepts set their faces firmly toward
the future, a future of their own
creation.

Of course, the Zionist-socialists
never had the entire arena to them-
selves. There was what the authors
call "Revisionist Zionism," the
minoritarian, nationalist, non-so-
cialist strain identified with the
figure of Vladimir Jabotinsky—
never in a position of much influ-
ence and power in the early days,
but providing a sort of perpetually
irritating, dissonant counterpoint
to the mainstream system of con-
duct and belief. Clearly it answered
to a strain of opinion to which the
socialists, through the Histadrut,
did not and could not address them-
selves: a desire to concentrate on
the task of achieving political inde-
pendence rather than on "utopian"
social projects, a much more pes-
simistic view of the Arab-Jewish con-
flict and its likely outcome, an im-
patience with words, a yearning for
deeds, and a distinct attraction to
the martial, the conventionally
glorious, even (though not consci-
ously) the apocalyptic.

"Revisionist" is perhaps a slight
misnomer. The Revisionist party
was originally a rather middle-class
affair: its founder-members would
have felt at home in the Chamber
of Deputies of Third Republic
France. But it is undeniable that
Jabotinsky did move steadily away
from his old colleagues in the party
in the course of the 1930's toward
the young men of Betar, the much
more strident, uniformed youth
movement attached to but hardly
identical with Revisionism. It was
the Betar strain that may be said
to have finally arrived at the gates
of power and office with Menachem
Begin's electoral victory of 1977.

MEANWHILE, with national inde-

pendence, and with the supremacy
of that most powerful, original, and
still in some ways enigmatic figure,
David Ben-Gurion, there was ush-
ered in the third set of beliefs and
ritual, what Liebman and Don-
Yehiya call "Statism" (a not very
successful attempt to translate
mamlakhtiyut). At its heart was the
sense that the state was indeed the
great creation of Jewry in modern
times, that it was therefore to be
cherished, that it rightly com-
manded support all around, and
that it and it alone could serve to
unify the Jews (whereas even Ben-
Gurion's own socialism divided
them). Moreover, the state was
peculiarly fitted to this great task
because in the nature of things it
encompassed means whereby citi-
zens could both act out their loyal-
ties and be instructed in them. For
plainly it could provide, indeed it
had to provide, holidays, flags, and
other symbols, service (military and
other), uniforms, even history.

Finally, there has been what the
authors call (a little coyly?) the
"New Civil Religion," the hall-
marks of which are dissatisfaction
with simple "Statism"; a rather un-
certain but undoubtedly sincere de-
sire to place the Zionist enterprise
in the context of Jewish history as a
whole; and, lastly, a measure of
mysticism—national (in the Revi-
sionist style) and, more problemat-
ically, religious.

The authors contend, and plain-
ly they are right, that the beliefs
and rites that are central to the
integrative social process and to the
mobilization of the nation are no
longer wholly or even very signifi-
cantly socialist; nor are they what
might be termed Ben-Gurionite
statist (or better, *republican*). They
are now substantially permeated
with such elements of the tradition
as Nation, Land, Eternal Israel, and
—uncertainly in some quarters but
very confidently in others—Provi-
dence and the Divine. And the past,
the exilic past, has been duly
brought out of the cellars and attics
of the public mind, cleaned up, and
put on display for all to see and ad-
mire. There is even a sort of shrine:
the Museum of the Diaspora in Tel
Aviv, a truly brilliant attempt to
make the immensely varied and
complex Jewish past concrete and

visible. Troops of children and parties of conscript soldiers are ushered through it day after day, along with the inevitable but welcome busloads of tourists. There is indeed much in it to marvel at, and few who enter fail to emerge instructed, not to say thoughtful. But that the effect is to *celebrate* the Diaspora, and so go some way toward making a nonsense of the university, the city, and the country in which the museum is placed, hardly any seem to notice, so greatly has the spirit of the times changed in the course of the past thirty or fifty years.

IF THE central thesis of this book is vindicated by the existence of the Museum of the Diaspora, it is similarly vindicated, and indeed beautifully exemplified, in the history of the institution, Bar-Ilan University, to which Professors Liebman and Don-Yehiya themselves belong. Bar-Ilan is only a quarter of an hour's drive from Tel Aviv University, but a world away in ethos and atmosphere. Uniquely in Israel's system of higher education, it is denominational: an explicitly Orthodox institution. When it was founded in the 1950's it was greeted by powerful opposition—institutional no less than ideological—and, let it be said, by sneers. For a long time its sponsors and senior professors plowed a very solitary furrow.

Broadly, the difficulties were of three kinds. First, the religious fundamentalists who set so much of the tone in Israeli Orthodoxy objected to what was, after all, a university in the accepted sense, where a fairly full range of subjects—among them such tricky ones as sociology and psychology, to say nothing of Bible—were to be taught and researched in accordance with the accepted norms of scholarship. Secondly, the mainstream secularists objected to a sectarian institution and feared (rightly, as it turned out) an increment of force and prestige to a rival ideological camp. Finally, the university itself had the greatest trouble recruiting staff who were both academically competent and religiously observant.

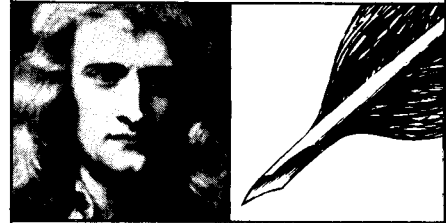
Inevitably, there were compromises all around. But what finally set Bar-Ilan permanently on the

map was its acceptance by society at large—and not least by the political establishment—as a proper and legitimate type of institution, and a desirable one to boot. This occurred in some measure precisely because, in the aftermath of the 1967 war and the flood tide of religious nationalism released by that event, Bar-Ilan came close to epitomizing the new synthesis, the new civil religion.

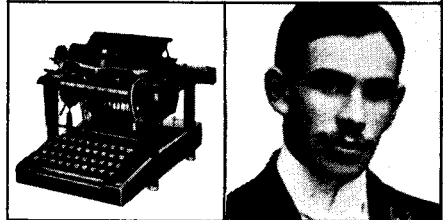
This is not to imply that Liebman and Don-Yehiya, as scholars who happen to belong to an Orthodox institution, have failed to do their work scrupulously or, so far as possible, to conceal their own ideological hand. They make a point of not taking issue with the viewpoints they present. They have, in fact, undertaken a difficult and important task in sociopolitical research: laying bare both the roots of a political culture and the means by which it is maintained. Their methods are not exceptional: a sample survey of opinion (perhaps a little out of date), a careful and thorough reading of the printed sources, a brave effort to think through the problem from beginning to end. They do provide rather more information than even the specialist reader can manage, and it is fitted into rather too neat a scheme and too strict a categorization to do true and full justice to the inherently intricate, often self-contradictory material out of which the story of Israel's "civil religion" must be put together. It should be said, too, that they show less than adequate sensitivity to the cross-currents that are as much a part of the sea of trouble that is Israel's political culture as to the mainstream which is (properly) their major concern; for all is still in flux.

Nevertheless, and despite one's reservations on this and that aspect of the analysis, this is a book that sets a high standard of seriousness and penetration. In it, the reader is taken on a long journey into some of the recesses of the political mind in Israel—the mind or minds of some (though not all) of the governed no less than some (though not all) of the governors. It is a long and instructive journey—if necessarily, for an old-fashioned Zionist, an uncomfortable one.

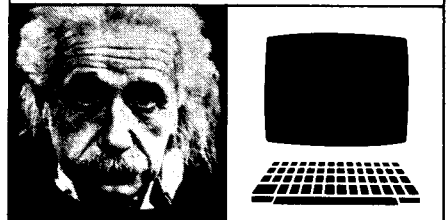
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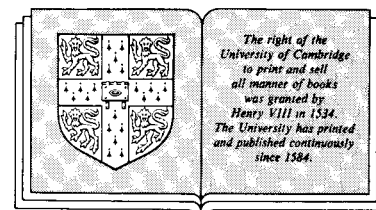
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New Deal Memories

IN THE SHADOW OF FDR: FROM
HARRY TRUMAN TO RONALD REA-
GAN. By WILLIAM LEUCHTENBURG.
Cornell University Press. 364 pp.
\$19.95.

Reviewed by JOHN C. CHALBERG

BURIED in the preface of this book
is the author's version of a
modern American success story.
The year was 1939. A sixteen-year-
old boy from Queens entertained
dreams of attending Cornell Uni-
versity, only to learn that the \$400
tuition was beyond his family's
means. Two scholarships pushed
him closer to his goal, as did his
summer job pedaling a Good
Humor cart through his neighbor-
hood. Diligence proved unavailing,
however, until the day President
Roosevelt came to Queens. The boy
rode his bike for block after block
to reach the huge throng which had
gathered to greet the President. In
short order his cart was empty, the
tuition money was in hand, and the
boy was happily off to Cornell.

But how would he live there?
The boy arrived on campus not
quite sure—until he learned of the
National Youth Administration.
Within a few days he was busily
cleaning test tubes at thirty cents an
hour. Firmly on his way now, he
would be "sustained" all through
his undergraduate years by this
same NYA.

Little did the undergraduate
know just how well and how long
he would continue to be "sus-
tained." For the boy was histo-
rian William Leuchtenburg, who
emerged from Cornell to become in
due course the author of six books
on Franklin D. Roosevelt and the
New Deal. In this, his seventh book,
the subject is not precisely FDR
but the memory of FDR, specifical-
ly the FDR remembered by the
eight Presidents who have occupied
the White House since April 12,
1945. Ironically and, in Leuchten-
burg's view, crazily, the President
with the warmest remembrances of
Roosevelt is the current incumbent.

JOHN C. CHALBERG, a new contributor,
teaches American history at Norman-
dale Community College in Minnesota.

Among FDR's successors only Ron-
ald Reagan—whom Leuchtenburg
accuses of dismembering the New
Deal—has had no axes to grind,
no grudges to avenge, no ghosts to
exorcise.

FIRST in line was Harry Truman
who, as a Senator, often resented
the heavy-handed pressure from
Roosevelt's White House, and as
Vice President doubly resented the
cavalier treatment he received. As
President, Truman chose to work at
Herbert Hoover's desk, disliked the
term "liberal," and quickly removed
all but two of Roosevelt's cabinet
members.

Eisenhower had a grudging ad-
miration for FDR as commander-
in-chief, but he thought Roosevelt
a "cruel man," and his hostility to
the New Deal was unrelenting. To
Eisenhower, the TVA was "creep-
ing socialism," and his cabinet was
a haven for wealthy businessmen
who abhorred FDR. Even Eisen-
hower's liberal speech writer, Em-
met John Hughes, regarded it as
sheer "unrealism" to praise Ike for
consolidating the social gains of the
New Deal.

John F. Kennedy recalled that
Roosevelt's death was "no deeply
traumatic experience." He also hap-
pened to have a father for whom
the *living* Roosevelt had been a
traumatic experience (and vice
versa). Their first encounter had
taken place during World War I
when the elder Kennedy, then an
assistant manager of the Bethlehem
shipyards, refused to release two
battleships to the government until
payment was received. Upon learn-
ing of this canny insouciance,
Franklin Roosevelt, then an As-
sistant Secretary of the Navy, dis-
patched a flotilla of tugs to tow his
prizes away. Subsequent relations
between the Irish immigrant's son
and the Hyde Park patrician were
no improvement.

Once elected, JFK resisted identi-
fying himself as a New Deal liberal.
A man of the Center, he practiced
what Leuchtenburg characterizes as
an "emotionless liberalism." (Ken-
nedy's own phrase was "qualitative
liberalism.") With no mandate for
great social change, Kennedy de-
cided instead to tinker. In 1961
Americans may have been ordered

to "bear any burden" to defend freedom abroad, but at home they were asked to figure out for themselves just what they might do for their country. When only a paltry few took up the challenge, Kennedy complained that domestic issues were just too complicated for general understanding.

He also complained about another Roosevelt—Eleanor—who cast her own long shadow over JFK (and Truman and Johnson as well). Eleanor had been sharply (and publicly) critical of what she regarded as then-Senator Kennedy's waffling on Joseph McCarthy. In 1960 Mrs. Roosevelt joined the abortive "Stop Kennedy" campaign. When that failed, she forced the young candidate into the supplicant's role. Woo her he did; privately, he grumbled that her obstinacy stemmed from maternal jealousy: "She can't stand it that Joe's kids turned out better than hers."

Lyndon Johnson may have been a son of Texas, but he insisted that FDR was "a daddy to me always." Leuchtenburg detects an "obsessive quality" in Johnson's filial rivalry with Roosevelt. In 1964, for example, Johnson was running not against Barry Goldwater but against FDR's 1936 record. Once elected on his own, he chose to fight wars at home and abroad simultaneously, thereby (in Leuchtenburg's view) going "daddy" one better. No "Dr. Win-the-War" would replace "Dr. New Deal"; instead, there would be both guns and butter aplenty. Yet out of his desire to outdo "daddy," Leuchtenburg concludes, came fateful consequences for LBJ and all the rest of us: riots in the streets, credibility gaps, inflation, and a Presidency and a nation in shreds.

Leuchtenburg accepts Garry Wills's judgment that Richard Nixon was essentially a "postwar man." But Nixon, too, had memories of Roosevelt, none of them very good ones. A wartime bureaucrat in the Office of Price Administration, Nixon emerged from that experience with a generalized distrust of government. If Johnson was determined to bring honor to Roosevelt (and himself) by surpassing "daddy's" achievements, Nixon resolved to purge the New Deal legacy from public memory by burying its Great

Society stepson. Both efforts, according to Leuchtenburg, failed; Johnson's because he tried too hard, Nixon's because he didn't try hard enough.

FDR mattered little to Gerald Ford, who declared Truman to be "my kind of guy." Jimmy Carter, on the other hand, matters much to Leuchtenburg, precisely because Roosevelt also mattered so little to the man from Plains (he too reserved his affection for the not-so-liberal man from Independence). It was one thing for Gerald Ford, a

former Republican Congressman, to dismiss the dominant presidential presence of this century. But it was something else again, frets Leuchtenburg, for a former Democratic governor to have done so—especially one who was the first member of that disparate tribe since FDR to be elevated to the Presidency.

Leuchtenburg has taken to heart all the nasty things that liberals like Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. have written about Carter, the "most conservative Democratic President since Cleveland." Here was the first post-Roosevelt Democratic Presi-

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dent never to have had an audience with FDR. (For that matter, Carter had never crossed paths with *any* of the post-Roosevelt Democratic Presidents.) To make matters worse, Roalyn was no Eleanor. During the 1976 campaign she feared that Ford was gaining because Jimmy had begun to sound "too much like FDR"; and once settled in the White House she steered the President away from Roosevelt liberals.

The result, in Leuchtenburg's view, was a Presidency committed to decentralization and uncommitted to large-scale federal spending. There may have been McGovernites lurking in the corridors of the Carter State Department, but New Dealers were left out in the cold. Old Rexford Tugwell's misuses were routinely forwarded to a low-level staffer; both the President and Vice President sent their regrets to the forty-fourth anniversary dinner of FDR's first inauguration. There were neither visions nor dreams—not even slogans—during the Carter years. Fireside chats, yes,

but this time the fireside was the President's, not ours, and not a very warm one at that, to judge by the well-buttoned cardigan worn by the President.

Why the distance? Perhaps the young Jimmy Carter's anti-New Deal father had banned gatherings around the family radio when FDR took to the air waves. True, the younger Carter, despite his father, did have fond memories of at least one New Deal innovation. But that, Leuchtenburg sneers, was not Social Security, collective bargaining, or the minimum wage. A technocrat to the end, Carter opted for the Rural Electrification Administration. Only a boy from Queens could censure a boy from Plains for having so limited a social vision.

So much for the seven post-Roosevelt dwarfs. The next name in the line of succession is that of Ronald Reagan. Distasteful though it be, Leuchtenburg can avoid his task no longer. Having charted storms, leaks, navigational errors, and

minor mutinies during the course of the New Deal's voyage through recent history, he must now confront both a shipwreck and a sea change—and his reluctance is obvious.

It might have been easier for him if the new captain had been a confirmed Roosevelt-hater—which he is not—or if the contrasts with his seven predecessors were not so stark—but they are. Unlike Truman, Reagan did not suffer personal embarrassment under Roosevelt. Unlike Eisenhower, he voted for FDR in 1932 (and three times thereafter). Unlike Kennedy or Johnson, he was a founding member of an ADA chapter. Unlike Nixon, he came from a Democratic family. Unlike Kennedy or Carter, he had a father who revered Roosevelt and for whom the New Deal meant work and sustenance. And unlike Ford or Carter, he continues to hold up Roosevelt, not Truman, as his "kind of guy."

Yet of all the Presidents Leuchtenburg deals with, only Reagan reduces him to sputtering expletives; the fact that Reagan expresses genuine admiration for FDR enrages (and mystifies) Leuchtenburg all the more. He will have none of George Will's soothing comparisons of Roosevelt and Reagan. Just as Roosevelt sought to save capitalism by tempering it, Will has written, so Reagan seeks to save the welfare state. Leuchtenburg denies the comparison. Roosevelt was a pragmatist, while Reagan in his view is an "ideologue," out to restore some imagined ancient past by destroying the hard-won social gains of the more recent past.

The final shot has been fired: when all else fails, label the enemy an "ideologue." Leuchtenburg can criticize Truman and Kennedy for being excessively pragmatic. He can breathe a sigh of relief that Eisenhower, Nixon, and Ford failed to reverse the New Deal. He can regret the failed Presidency of Lyndon Johnson. He can even condescend to Jimmy Carter, "America's first national city manager." Only Ronald Reagan stands condemned outright. Why? Because, one is forced to conclude, he threatens to be the first President since FDR to cast his own lengthy shadow.

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AFTER BEGIN

***A Noted Journalist
Reports on Present
Reality and Future
Possibility***

DANIEL GAVRON

In his final paragraphs Leuchtenburg praises FDR for teaching his successors a lesson in how to cope with the memory of an awesome predecessor. In 1932 the patron saint of the Democrats was Thomas Jefferson, who believed deeply in limited government. What did Roosevelt do but choose a Jefferson Day dinner as the occasion to endorse national economic planning? On other occasions, he quoted Jefferson as a spokesman for the notion that government can be a "refuge." He also put Jefferson on a postage stamp and on the nickel, and built a temple to the sage of Monticello on the banks of the Potomac. And all the while, Roosevelt was supplanting Jefferson as the founding father of the modern Democratic party.

Such exercises in political legerdemain were available to Roosevelt's successors, but only Ronald Reagan seems to have mastered the art, perhaps because Reagan is the first to conceive of FDR as an opportunity. To Truman, Roosevelt was an albatross and to Carter he remains an irrelevancy. Only Reagan, who is both old enough and detached enough to think otherwise, has succeeded in paying homage to Roosevelt while using his memory for his own, quite considerable, ends.

Entering the Kingdom

RELIGION IN THE SECULAR CITY: TOWARD A POST-MODERN THEOLOGY. By HARVEY COX. *Simon & Schuster*. 304 pp. \$16.95.

Reviewed by MARY TEDESCHI

IT is nearly twenty years since Harvey Cox, a professor at the Harvard Divinity School, became a sensation among liberal theologians with the publication of *The Secular City*. In that book, he celebrated the advent of secular urban civilization and the retreat of traditional Christianity. Secularization, "an authentic consequence of biblical faith," would liberate men from the religious superstitions of the past

and turn their attention, as the God of Genesis intended, to fashioning the world around them. As Cox himself pointed out, there was nothing new in this acclaim for the secular epoch. The ground had been prepared years before by German theologians, particularly Dietrich Bonhoeffer. But Harvey Cox succeeded as no one else in translating their message into the American vernacular; and in so doing, he fulfilled the longings of a new

generation of American clergy and laity.

Yet even in the heyday of *The Secular City*, a specter was stalking liberal theologians, and Harvey Cox knew it. Having declared that the kingdom was of this world, they could now choose among the various movements that were claiming to usher it in; but on what grounds? As Cox himself said in his book: "We are trying to live in a period of revolution without a the-

Thomas Sowell

"is able to conceive webs of explanation that are much more subtle, sophisticated, and accurate than those of his lessers." —STUART WARNER, *The Wall Street Journal*



1984 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the historic Supreme Court decision on school desegregation, *Brown v. Board of Education*, and the twentieth anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. What has actually happened over these decades? Who has gained? Who has lost? Is "civil rights" today sacrificing reality for rhetoric?

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—NATHAN GLAZER, *The New Republic*

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MARY TEDESCHI, a new contributor, is assistant managing editor of the Public Interest.

ology of revolution. The development of such a theology should be the first item on the theological agenda today."

This concern lies at the heart of *Religion in the Secular City*, in which Cox again proclaims the demise of one era and the coming of another. The modern secular age, it seems, is now ending, and the theology that sought to explain it has been rendered obsolete. The worldwide return of religion as a potent social force suggests that we are entering a "post-modern" era of "religious revival and the return of the sacral." Liberal theology, which devoted itself to explaining the role of religion in the secular era, must give way to a theology better suited to the new age. According to Cox, the beginnings of this post-modern theology have already appeared, "borne by vigorous anti-modernist religious movements." To ascertain what these movements can contribute to the coming theology, Cox singles out

two for extended analysis: American fundamentalism and Latin American liberation theology.

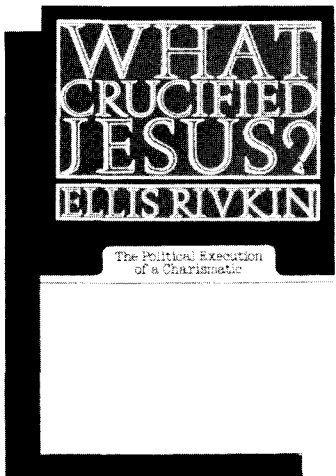
Cox notes at the outset that fundamentalism will contribute little to post-modern theology, and spends the first third of his book explaining why. While fundamentalists are "highly critical of the modern world and its theology and also strenuously engaged with it," the movement is limited theologically by its attachment to secular means and goals. Despite its reactionary origins, fundamentalism has cast its lot with the modern world, particularly technology; there is, Cox warns, an "unavoidable contradiction" between the fundamentalists' anti-modern message and their reliance on mass media. Moreover, the movement is too ideological, too closely identified with the support of capitalism and American foreign policy. By allying themselves with these narrow political goals, the fundamentalists have excluded themselves from a post-modern the-

ology which must address the hitherto dispossessed people of the world: namely, women, minorities, and the poor.

Cox then turns to liberation theology, and it is here that his hopes for a post-modern theology come to rest. "Liberation theology," whose origins may be traced to the mid-1960's, became widely recognized in the early 1970's when Gustavo Gutiérrez, the so-called "father" of the liberationists, published *A Theology of Liberation*. The movement is largely, though not exclusively, Catholic, and its leading representatives are Latin American theologians heavily influenced by modern European thought and Marxism. Liberation theology claims to speak for the poor and oppressed; its central tenet, in Gutiérrez's words, is that to be Christian is "to be united with the poor and exploited of this world from within the very heart of the social confrontations and 'popular' struggles for liberation."

For Cox, liberation theology is a vigorous movement which rejects the liberal theological consensus; but unlike fundamentalism, it is truly a "people's" affair, one tolerant of and addressed to the oppressed throughout the world. The liberationists "are trying to make Jesus' life purpose their own"; they represent "the lowest castes, the outsiders, the poor and ritually impure." This sacralization of oppression leads liberation theology to embrace religious pluralism; in a world torn between oppressors and oppressed, the doctrinal differences among religions become insignificant.

In Cox's scheme, such toleration is an essential component of post-modern theology. The age of the nation-state is passing away, and a world community is emerging in its place. National sovereignty, privatized religion, faith in technology and rational planning—these and other features of the modern age are disappearing, and the only remaining question is whether the coming world community will "develop quickly enough to prevent the dying nation states from trampling everyone to death in their



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final throes and twitches." For Harvey Cox, it is clear, only the liberationists can provide theological order in this chaos. And as surely as Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, liberation theology will bring the kingdom to earth.

Now of all the ages, eras, and epochs that Harvey Cox has ever laid to rest, it is surely the age of reason whose interment pleased him most. In his first book, he danced on the grave; in this one, he desecrates it. The damage begins with his purportedly fair treatment of the "anti-modernist" theologies.

His investigation of fundamentalism today (alias "the revival of redneck religion") begins with an account of a Sunday service at Jerry Falwell's Baptist church. The sermon, Cox notes, "certainly left some room for scholarly discomfort," and no doubt that discomfort accounts for the other smug comments scattered throughout the book, including these: fundamentalists "favor conspiracy theories," seek to "retrieve the cities from the infidels," and "may have struck a deal with Lucifer himself." Fundamentalism itself is variously described as a "pious bulwark," "a Billy Sunday punching the devil in the nose," and "a perverted form of Kierkegaard's existential inwardness." Long before he exposes the "contradiction" of television evangelism, it is obvious that Harvey Cox knows whose side the angels (in whom he may not believe) are on.

The problem of one-sided exposition has only begun; when it comes to the side he favors, Cox is a formidable euphemist. In his book, civil war is "conflict," hijackers are "people desperate enough to enter a flight deck, weapon in hand," and terrorists are "ordinary people [who] try everything they can to achieve their rights as human beings—and then turn reluctantly to metallic objects." He writes that Ernesto Cardenal, the Nicaraguan priest turned guerrilla (now Minister of Cultural Affairs), "represents the mystical and monastic stream of Christian history." Indeed, Cox's effusiveness over Cardenal and revolutionary Nicaragua at large knows no bounds. He free-

ly admits that "it would be hard to think of a better exemplar" of liberation theology than the saintly Cardenal and notes with considerable wistfulness that "As a Nicaraguan [Cardenal] lives his life at the very center of the history he incarnates."

It seems never to have entered Cox's head that liberation theology invites unsavory bedfellows. In defending liberationist policies, he reminds us that "Jesus' career was

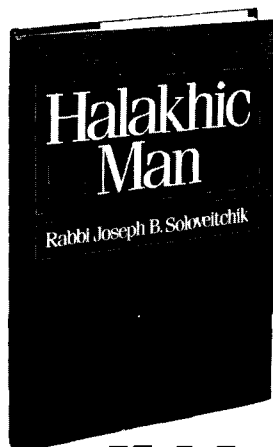
marked by conflict." It is a familiar excuse; Fidel Castro remarked in Jamaica in 1977 that "Christ was a great revolutionary." Still, while Cox's justifications are old, they surely are not plagiarized; there are no Castros in his book, no Sandinistas, and no Communists. In fact, the very words "Marx" and "Marxism" appear a total of five times in *Religion in the Secular City*. The omission is startling, for the methodology of these thinkers



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is "avowedly Marxist," as the prominent liberationist José Miguez-Bonino has pointed out. If Harvey Cox can explain liberation theology without Marx, he is a subtle theologian indeed—it is like writing Martin Luther out of the Reformation.

Cox's study of history is so off-hand that he can include Pius IX in a list of thinkers who "often sound modern despite themselves." This Pope was in fact among the most virulent reactionaries ever produced by the Catholic Church. His infamous *Syllabus of Errors*, issued in 1864, not only condemned socialism, Communism, and "clerico-liberal societies," it also forbade the teaching that the Pontiff should reconcile himself to "progress, liberalism, and recent civilization." But when Cox writes that Pius IX

"sounds modern," he betrays the flaw at the heart of this book: namely, its theological-historical nomenclature.

There is nothing "anti-modern" about liberation theology, just as there is nothing "modern" about Pius IX. On Cox's own definition, modernism is "the attempt to come to terms with the modern world," a world characterized by sovereign states, technology, bureaucracy, profit, and "the trivialization of religion." If Nicaragua is any example, the liberationists are extraordinarily adept, not to mention ruthless, at achieving these very things. Liberation theology is as "modern" a movement as any that incurred the wrath of Pius IX.

As for Cox's other speculations, particularly about the emerging world order, one can only say that medieval theology appears com-

monsensical by comparison. Harvey Cox has done it again: he has turned the tradition of speculative metaphysics into one of free association. *Religion in the Secular City* has all the earmarks of Cox's first best-seller, and its politically fashionable millenarianism will no doubt appeal to the substantial minority of increasingly politicized Christians.

Still, there is one Coxian fancy which provokes unexpected sympathy. In the tension between traditional Christians and liberationists, he detects the beginnings of a new Reformation, and this is surely a hope to be shared. If the Roman Church ever rids itself of the liberationists and their allies, it will have redeemed much of recent Catholic history. However unintended, there is consolation in Harvey Cox's philosophy.



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